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THE PICTURE:

AND

THE PROSPEROUS MAN.

VOL. I.



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THE PICTURE.

CHAPTER I.

An excellent coach was the Celerity, that ran from N—— to L——. Its pace was six miles an hour, and it was drawn by three horses: but on particular occasions, as whilst there had been an opposition on the road, its speed was raised to near eight miles an hour, and then it was drawn by only a pair. This paradox admits of a simple explanation; viz., the leaders on each of the two stages, into which the road from N—— to L—— was divided, were maimed, halt, and blind, and were therefore less useful than ornamental.

One day in November, 1822, it was proceeding on its journey as usual, when, in passing a cart

which was left without any one to take care of it except two donkeys, the coachman unfortunately drove just an inch and a quarter too far to the left, where the central part of the road was raised a foot or two above the side, and over the coach went: like one of Homer's heroes, "falling, it resounded, and its implements rattled around it."

Mark Masborough, who a moment before had been seated on the box, found himself alighted on his feet, shaken a little, but otherwise unhurt. His fellow-passengers, he soon ascertained, had not been equally fortunate. The coachman had broken a leg; but, as it was a wooden one, he seemed likely to suffer more inconvenience than pain. An old woman and her daughter, who had been seated side by side on the seat behind the box, now lay side by side on the ground. The poor old woman, who had had her arm drawn through the handle of a large basket, which she had rested on the seat beside her, had been unable to disentangle it, and, in consequence, it had most seriously aggravated her fall: she had broken her arm, and was otherwise much injured.

The daughter was bruised and stunned. The inside passengers were a very old gentleman and his wife, both infirm, but not much injured by the accident, beyond the alarm. While Mark Masborough slowly raised the unfortunate old woman, who screamed violently, and rested her back against a bank, Jehu proceeded, as well as he could, to open the door of the upper side of the unfortunate CELERITY. Having done this, and extricated the aged pair, he returned towards Mark, who, notwithstanding the serious nature of the scene in other respects, could not avoid a smile at his overthrower's gait, which, owing to his sinister leg having undergone the figure *apocope* by reason of the decay of the timber, was of that description which schoolboys call "*iambic*" and the little boys in the street "dot-and-go-one." Let the reader walk a pair of compasses with unequal legs across the table, or, if none are at hand, let him exercise his finger and thumb in like manner, and it will give him an idea of the approach of the son of Nimshi. Let him further call to mind any *mal-à-propos* absurdity in a

grave or tragic scene, and he will not lay it to hardness of heart, that Masborough could not control the muscles of his countenance.

"I don't see what there is to grin at, though it seems a good joke, sir; a very good joke for a poor woman to be killed," was the salutation with which the coachman greeted our hero.

"Nonsense, man!" replied Masborough: "I am laughing at you, and I cannot help it, though I 'm sorry for you; and still more for this poor woman, whom I am assisting as much as I can. Lift up her daughter, and tell me what we must do."

"Why, I 'll tell you what *you* must do: you must run across these fields through that wood, and ask for assistance at the Hall."

"What! at Rotherington Hall? Impossible!"

"Why, the Squire 's a queer 'un, no doubt; but I do think he 'd assist a fellow Christian in our case."

"O, I don't mean that.—The fact is, the Squire is my uncle," said Masborough. "We are not on terms, and have not been for years—I cannot go."

"Then," said Coachee, "you will let that old woman die for want of assistance. You see I cannot go: neither of the insides could walk to the Hall in two hours: the daughter should not leave her mother if she could, and—"

"Stop," said Masborough, "I will go. My uncle is odd, but most assuredly not unfeeling; and he will scarcely suspect I could lay a stratagem to renew our acquaintance at such a cost to my fellow-creatures.—And yet I don't like it. How far are we from L——? Could not we get on to L——?"

"No, we could not," replied he of the abbreviated limb. "It is four miles off. You and I cannot raise the coach: these people cannot walk; we cannot carry them: we may wait for assistance, you 'll say; why, I do not meet or pass one man on the whole stage for days together."

This Masborough readily believed, for the communication between N—— and L—— was so small, that the CELERITY transacted almost the whole of it. The road, as it has been already remarked, was divided into two stages, and they had changed

horses at a lone farm-house. There was a very small village near N——, but nothing of the kind on the latter stage, where the accident had happened.

"But you 'll be saying, perhaps, let 's wait for who belongs to those asses as caused the whole? —let 's wait for them."

"No," said Masborough, "I shall not exactly say so, for I saw him run off alarmed at the consequence of his own negligence. It was a lad about ten years old, who was helping himself to some turnips out of that field, and I saw him make his escape towards the wood. But, however, I 'll lose no more time; I can easily show my uncle whether I sought to renew his acquaintance." And so saying, he threw off his cloak, jumped the ditch, scrambled over the hedge, and was soon lost sight of.

Whilst Masborough is running towards the Hall, we will just run over so much of his previous history as is necessary to explain his present position with his uncle. His father, the Rev. George Masborough, was a younger son, who

had received from his father a good education, and his blessing; whilst his elder brother had received the blessing and an estate worth about seven thousand a-year, with no other incumbrance than his parent's dying request that he would purchase George a living. Accordingly he did so; and in order that his brother might experience no delay, he at once raised a handsome sum, and procured him the presentation to a valuable benefice a few miles from his own residence. John Masborough, as may be seen by this instance, had good feelings about him; but he was not faultless, and was very eccentric. It is no proof, however, of his eccentricity, that, in return for his liberality towards his brother, he expected a due share of observance and gratitude. Now it so happened that the two brothers measured this unknown quantity by rather a different scale; so that the Squire considered the Parson more in his debt than the latter appeared to consider himself: and on one occasion, when the Parson had differed from him in an argument about some measure of Government, which made no difference to either of them what-

ever way it might be decided, and where *therefore* they *naturally* wrought themselves into a fit of patriotic warmth, he did not scruple to remind him of his obligation. The Parson, in the anger of the moment, gave all the merit to his dying parent, forgetting that his brother had at least construed his words liberally, and not merely complied with the letter. "Ungrateful" and "overbearing" were rejoined and surrejoined; and the result was, that the two wrong-headed brothers parted in anger, and never met more on friendly terms. A few days after their quarrel, the clergyman was married to a young lady without any fortune. He had long been engaged to her, but his brother had been anxious for him to marry the only daughter of a gentleman whose estate adjoined his own, saying that, as he was resolved to die a bachelor, he should like the two properties to centre in his brother's son. However, this not suiting the inclination of the Divine, he had endeavoured to win over the Squire to his views; and actually deferred his marriage, in the hope that such a concession would in time induce his brother to

sanction it with his presence. But that motive was now suspended, if not contradicted, and love prevailed. He was married; and, although he wrote a letter to his brother requesting him to be present at the ceremony, yet, as it contained no apology, it was of course unattended to. The Squire was much away from home after this event, and some years passed by and found the brothers still estranged. George had a large family, of whom Mark was the eldest.

In time, through the mediation of a common friend, who took the opportunity of the death of the Clergyman's wife, whose introduction into the family had been as it were the declaration of war after their rupture, the brothers met; but they had been too long parted, the friendly habit of familiarity had lost too much of its corresponding form, for them ever perfectly to reunite. The Squire, though not very cordial with his brother, was pleased with his boy, and distinguished Mark with many a token of his regard. The skates that won Mark's way over the ice, and the pony that he rode after the hounds, were the presents

of his uncle; and they who know how the kindness of older people gains the heart of youth, will not wonder that the young urchin loved the giver of little Nebuchadnezzar.

The affection of the boy for his uncle grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength, and it may be doubted whether he did not almost think more of him than of his father.

At the house of the latter, he had many annoyances and many and favoured rivals. His eldest sister was the favourite of the father, and his second brother had been the mother's darling. That child was the most sickly and delicate of all; and on her death-bed, at their last parting, she had bequeathed him in a peculiar manner to his father's most tender affection. That dying prayer had been fulfilled too literally, more literally than the amiable petitioner dreamt of when she uttered it. She, though she had had her favourites, had been ever kind to all: but her husband was not, equally with her, endowed with an unlimited stock of affection; what he added to one of his children, he took from an-

other. George was benefitted, Mark was the sufferer—home was no home to him. At his uncle's it was very different; there he reigned unrivalled and alone, and, if he had not playfellows of his own age, he had the good-natured society of an older person, who for his sake tried to be young again.

Mark had continued to advance in his uncle's favour till he was upwards of twelve years old, and would probably have done so still, had their intercourse not been suddenly cut short. Another and a more bitter quarrel broke out between the brothers, and Mark was forbidden to go near his uncle on pain of his father's most severe displeasure. This measure was injudicious as to the boy's interest, tyrannical as to his feelings, and vindictive as to the other party. A man has no right to make his animosities a portion of the inheritance of his children:—and yet there are few who would like to see them on friendly terms with those whom they look upon as their enemies.

Poor Mark asked leave to bid his kind uncle good-bye, which was refused; and a cruel and un-

just insinuation accom anied the denial, viz., that he had very early in life learnt to look after his own separate interest, and that he did not mind how his father was insulted, provided he was his uncle's heir. Now Mark had never thought of any thing of the kind; he had not looked to the future, but to the past; and this his father must have seen, had he not been blinded by passion.

One day as Mark was riding out with his brother, whose donkey could ill keep up with his beloved Nebuchadnezzar, they met the Squire, who was riding in an opposite direction.

"Well, Mark, my boy! how are you, and how's Neb?" was the cordial greeting.

Poor Mark was so disconcerted, that he did not know what to do. He dared not take his uncle's hand; he dared not say he might not speak to him: he turned very red, looked down on the ground, twisted his whip, and was silent.

"Nay, Mark! are you, too, to quarrel with your uncle? But I suppose you are ordered by that ill-conditioned brute?"

"Pa's not an ill-conditioned brute—and you're another," roared-out the bestrider of the donkey, little George; "you're another, you are!"

The Squire turned towards this small assailant, and raised his stick in a threatening manner. The child cried, and attempted flight; but his long-eared beast would not quit his companion.

"Get along, you ugly little reptile; you are your papa's own," said the angry Squire; "and Mark, lad, tell me, are you ordered not to speak to your uncle, who never quarrelled with *you*?"

Poor Mark made no reply; but a flood of tears came instead.

"Well then, Mark," said his uncle, "all I can say is, I suppose you must obey; but if you'll come and live with me, you shall be my own boy, and I'll make a Squire of you. But it's no use saying so, either; that may not be. Well, Mark, come and see me, and no one will know."

So saying, Mr. Masborough galloped off, and the boys rode home.

George told the story to his father, and poor Mark was called his uncle's boy, and George his

Papa's own from that time. The persecutions that Mark endured on that account had an effect upon him that would seem curious, were it not so common; they in time somewhat estranged his heart from his uncle! Even with people of maturer years, it is but too frequently the case that a dislike is conceived against those on whose account they suffer inconvenience or ridicule, however little the party may have intended it.

To Mark his uncle's name was an ominous sound, and, in his young mind, names and things were not kept entirely distinct. Yet Mark was not prone to ingratitude: it was long before his earlier impression was thus weakened, and it never was wholly effaced. Not very long after this quarrel, the Squire went abroad, and remained some years absent from England. On his return, his nephew and he met by accident, and the former was so altered and grown that he did not recognise him. The young man thought he would not; and when they met afterwards, their greeting was not warm. The uncle had discovered who he was, and felt angry with his nephew, who

must have known him, (for he was not grown,) for not speaking to him before. They became strangers, and finally used to pass without notice; and yet each no doubt in the depth of his heart had feelings, which only wanted calling forth, to show that they were in reality what they always were, as the gem in the mine does not glitter till the ray of the torch is on it!

Whilst things continued on this footing, an opportunity occurred for the Squire, who, living on half his income, had accumulated a very large sum of ready money, to purchase a house larger and handsomer than his own, and moreover farther from his brother. It was Rotherington Hall; and to that place he had removed about a year before the time at which we left Mark hastening towards it across the fields.

Mark found himself in front of a spacious Elizabethan Hall, with turrets and pinnacles, of brick, faced with stone. A moment he paused to survey the edifice, as he passed through the gate-house, leaving the stables and out-buildings to

his left. Then he hastily rushed forward, and rang loudly at the front door.

The interval between that peal and the appearance of the footman was one of anxious suspense to Mark Masborough. His fellow-passengers, and even the maimed old woman, were objects second in his thoughts to himself and his uncle. The coach-horses, the donkeys, and Nebuchadnezzar, were all before his mind's eye; but the tear that rose was called up by the last.

A servant came to the door, and Mark briefly explained his visit. "I will tell my master, sir," said the man, to whom Mark was quite unknown, "and no doubt he will order some of us to go to your assistance." So saying, he left Mark, and went to communicate the case to his master.

In a few minutes he returned, and said, "His master would send his carriage and his gig for the conveyance of the passengers, and would come himself and speak to the gentleman, and accompany him back to the road."

Mark felt a breathless sensation pass over him at these words; and his bosom beat quick when he heard the steps of the old Squire approaching. The moment he saw Mark he started back; his busy hastening step was arrested; his colour changed, and he seemed at a loss what to say.

"Sir," said Mark, wishing to relieve the embarrassment of both by a rapid explanation, "I trust the message of your servant has at once explained the cause of my present intrusion. Nothing short of necessity would have induced me to take such a liberty: I was the only passenger able to come and ask assistance."

"Mark Masborough," said the old man, slowly, "I need no apology. The accident—the—the —O! Mark!" He put out his hand to his nephew, the tears started from his eyes, and his aged frame shook as he gave way to his feelings. The cold manner he had assumed he was not able to retain; the thought of his early affection had knocked at his heart—knocked, and it was opened!

Short was their explanation; the urgent errand

of the nephew somewhat checked the curiosity of the uncle; and ere many minutes had elapsed, they were side by side in the Squire's gig, driving at a rapid pace towards the turnpike road, whilst the carriage was left to follow them as quickly as it could. The old Squire now troubled not himself to inquire any farther particulars of the accident which had occurred; so anxious was he to question his nephew on his own situation and the events that had happened since last they met. A few of the principal ones were all that he had time to relate before they arrived at the scene of the CELERITY's overthrow.

It was arranged that the lady and gentleman who had been inside should occupy the gig, as the old woman would require the principal part of the carriage. A sort of bed was made for her by filling the interval between the seats with boxes and bags, and laying the cushions and the coach-seats of the CELERITY over them; and her daughter rode with her, supporting her in her arms. The coachman rode on the box by the side of the Squire's coachman; and another ser-

vant walked by the side of the carriage, which could only proceed at a slow pace, lest the patient should be shaken. They were ordered to stop at the door of the Squire's surgeon, Mr. Slaughter, who lived at L——, and to receive his instructions as to whether they should take their charge to the hospital.

The Squire promised to come over the next day and inquire how all went on. His nephew had already consented to return with him to the Hall: nor had he required much persuasion, for a willing auditor needs no great outlay of argument. And yet there was much of reason in what the old gentleman had advanced, namely, "that a son ought, as a general rule, to attend to the request of a parent, but that it should be a reasonable request, and not such an uncharitable one as to keep up hereditary feuds—'*pugnent ipsique nepotesque*,' you know—and repay kindness with unkindness, because of the quarrel of any third party, however nearly related."

"Besides, Mark," the Squire added, "you must now be of age, I should think; and therefore

the enmity is your own, if you continue it. But I know you will not; and, believe me, I bear your father no ill-will."

Mark readily assented to this reasoning, and, besides, he argued in his own mind that this might be the means of bringing the brothers together again. Yet, in truth, from what he knew of his father's character, and had been taught of his uncle's, there was little hope of any such result. But alas! the human heart, when it is seeking for good motives to excuse actions of impulse, is not a severe self-censor: and an objector, who could have dived into the recesses of his breast, might have asked Mark how any such consequence was to arise from a visit, which he meant never to divulge.

CHAPTER II.

It was dusk by the time the uncle and nephew got back to the Hall, and the dinner had been waiting for them. They did not keep it waiting longer by any great outlay of time at their toilet, but were soon seated at their cheerful meal; and as they drew their chairs to the fire when it was over, and filled a bumper of port, such as could not be equalled in the county of L——, the heart of the Squire expanded with joy, and his fine old countenance glowed with an expression of pleasure, such as had not warmed the one and irradiated the other for many a long year. He talked of the past, of Mark's visits to his former abode, of Nebuchadnezzar, and of their meeting in the lane. Their not speaking to each other was explained and forgiven. The Squire talked of

the present, of his own loneliness, and his regard for Mark: he talked of the future, of his period in life, and of Mark's relationship. Then he made Mark again and again tell him his own history, how long he had left school, and was much surprised at learning that he was near his twenty-second birthday, and had taken his degree at Cambridge almost a year before. Mark did not conceal that it was his father's inability to supply the means, and not his own want of inclination, that had prevented his finishing his education by travelling on the continent; and his uncle readily promised to supply that deficiency, if Mark could procure his father's consent, or could manage to give a plausible reason for his absence.

"But Rome was not built in a day," added the Squire, "and we will take time to consider these things. At present I see it is ten o'clock; let us have coffee, and go to bed. I'm an early riser, and hope you are the same. '*Diluculo surgere*,' you know! In the morning before we start for L——, to see the patients, I must show you the lions of my new house."

Coffee being despatched, the Squire inquired which room had been got ready for his nephew; and Mark reminded him he had seen it already, when he went to dress for dinner.

"Well," said the Squire, "I will just come and see that you have a good fire;" and they ascended the spacious staircase.

"Ah! they should have put you into the Tiger room; but this is just as good!" exclaimed the Squire, finding they turned to the right and not to the left.

When the Squire had satisfied himself that the fire had been duly attended to, he wished Mark good-night, and left him to his meditations. The bed-room was one of most spacious proportions, lofty and surrounded with tapestry; and there stood the state-bed, with its curtains heavy with embroidery, and with posts as tall as the masts of a small vessel! Mark, who had been used to a very confined bed-room in the crowded rectory, and to a most diminutive cabin in college, felt himself in quite a novel situation; and the stories he had read of sliding panels and interesting

villains, the Daggerdorfs and Pistolbergs, came crowding into his mind, as he looked upon the grim warriors on the walls. He was an enthusiast in romance and poetry, and he was now in a scene very congenial with both. Another feeling, too, *would* steal into his thoughts, that one day he might be lord of this splendid mansion; but he checked the ungracious idea, founded as it must be on the loss of its present owner, his kind uncle. With his brain beset with a strange mixture of rambling fancies, and hardly conscious of what he did, Mark threw off his coat and his waistcoat, and was proceeding with his toilet, when his eye fell upon a long line in the tapestry, and he perceived it was a door. He opened it, and found it only led to a small dressing-room; but he was induced by the discovery to look round the walls, and examine whether there were any more openings. Opposite the fire-place he saw the handle of a door, and, taking his candle in his hand, he opened it, and found himself in an immense drawing-room, with recesses filled with books, and the walls covered with pictures.

"Well," thought he, "I must not forestall my uncle's lionizing," and he was turning back, when the light fell upon a face in a picture of extraordinary beauty. Mark raised the candle above his head, and took a more accurate survey.

The picture was a group of the four Seasons, as Mark quickly perceived; but he was a little puzzled by the incongruous nature of the groups in the background. There appeared to be a strange mixture of classical with more modern dresses; and great was the astonishment of the gazer at the excellence of the painting and the oddness of the design. Even leaving the smaller figures entirely out of the question, there were enough to perplex him in the four principal ones. Spring, Summer, and Autumn were represented by females, and Winter by a male; but, instead of being an old man, he was a boy, and certainly, but for the devices and emblems by which the artist had pointed out his character, he was not, according to general notions, at all an apt representative; taken, however, in company with the three females, who were more characteristic, the meaning of the

boy altogether was easily guessed; just as, in a foreign language, by reading the context, one arrives at an understanding of any particular difficulty. Spring seemed to be about twelve or thirteen years old, a dark graceful little girl, with playful bright eyes and clustering ringlets: she was crowned with a wreath of leaves and unopened buds. Summer was older, as she should be; about seventeen or eighteen; and she was distinguished by a profusion of full-blown flowers. Autumn appeared to be between the two in age, but she was fair, with auburn hair, and eyes of that clear bright hue, which is sometimes called blue, and sometimes, and more truly, dark gray, and which is what the poets gave to Minerva.

This was the face which had fascinated Mark; and insensible must have been the soul, and dull the eye, which it had not fascinated. Some, many, might prefer the darker beauties; but the delicate and regular features of Grecian outline, the gentle and amiable expression on the face of Autumn, and the beautiful brow, smooth and full, surrounded as it was with a wreath of vine and

oak, tinged with the "sere and yellow leaf," appeared the very personification of sensibility. Her hand, which held a few ears of ripe corn, was so small, so delicately white, that it seemed as if it were the chosen instrument for dispensing blessings. Altogether, Mark thought he had never seen anything in reality, or in art, or in imagination, half so perfect and half so lovely. Gazing with rapture, he stood till a sigh escaped him, and he could not avoid a smile at his own enthusiasm. He returned to his chamber, and dreamed of the exquisite figure and face, which filled his last waking thoughts.

In the morning, before he went down stairs, he returned to the image of his goddess; and it is not certain that he did not pray to some god to turn the breathing figure into flesh and blood, as the lover of old, Pygmalion, found his statue warmed into life. After breakfast his uncle proposed a walk to the stables, and then to show him the lions of the house. Mark and he accordingly sallied forth. They visited the stables, the

kennels, the farm-yard, the garden, the kitchen-garden, and at last returned to the house.

"'*Ab Jove principium*,' which means let us begin from the top," said the Squire; "first let us look out on the leads:" and Mark followed his uncle, who acted the part of showman.

"You know, Mark, I bought this place of the Chessalettes, a strange wild family, as I am going to prove to you by an anecdote of this spot. The father of the present baronet was as wild as his son; and one day, you must know, he found a young lady, who was visiting his wife, alone here on these very leads. 'Oh opportunity, thy sin is great!' as Shakspeare says. This young lady he had been making furious love to; and now, he thought to himself, I shall not take another refusal. In vain the young lady appealed to his honour, to her being under his protection, his roof—'Not under my roof, my dear,' replied the gay Lothario, 'but safe above it, out of sight, out of hearing; come to the summer-house;' and he pointed to that turret, so fitted up. 'But

first let me fasten the entrance-door;' and he turned back to fasten that door at the top of the stairs. When he had done that, he looked round, and lo, the bird was flown! He could see her no where! He examined each turret, inside and out. He looked up to heaven, half believing she had been spirited away. He looked over the battlement, fearing she had in despair cast herself over. He would scarcely have been surprised to have seen her, lying a corpse, with the family rushing out of the house and gathering round her. At last, when he got to the far corner, the mystery was solved. She had indeed thrown herself over the battlement, but, to give herself a chance of escaping a broken neck, (for she had no anxiety to be a martyr if she could help it,) she bethought herself of leaping into an enormous holly, the largest almost that was ever seen, which had received her, and to which she still clung when her disappointed pursuer looked down upon her. The holly now is nearly of the same height as the house, tall as it is, you see; then it was not quite

so high, but very nearly; and a ladder soon set the lady at liberty, with her person a little bruised and scratched, but with her honour most heroically preserved! And now, Mark, you dog, do you think all young ladies would rather take such a leap as this, or yield to necessity?"

"I fear some might be less of heroines," said Mark, "but it is a curious legend if true."

"True enough, sir," said the Squire, "for, the son of the hero told it me, and his father had told him. But now we 'll descend. Mind these stairs. Well, now, here we are in the gallery. This is over the drawing-room, and these are all family portraits. But the best are below."

They descended to the drawing-room, and the Squire proceeded. "There is the hero of my story, between those windows; and that is his lady. She was a Lovell, of the same family as my grandmother; and that is—but—what, are you already at that picture by your bed-room? Ay, Mark, those are the Seasons—a pretty face that of Spring, and a prettier that of Summer: '*ver*

proterit æstas,' as Horace says;" and the Squire laughed at what he considered the happiness of his quotation.

"I prefer Autumn to either, sir," said Mark, gazing on the picture. "Do you know the artist, sir? It is exactly in the style of Lawrence."

"So it is," said the Squire, "very like one of his paintings, and one of his best; and might be his, for old Chessalette was fond of the arts. And yet, Lawrence would never have painted such an ill-assorted company within one frame."

"No," said Mark, "he would not, and therefore it cannot be his."

"Come," said the Squire, "it is time for us to ride to L——, and see your fellow-passengers. Come along. Why, would you stay staring there all day?" And he took his nephew's arm and hurried him out of the room.

They rode to L——, saw the doctor, and the poor old woman and her daughter; and Mr. Slaughter told them it was his decided opinion that, although the *os humeri* was broken, he had little doubt, as she was now under his care, he

should be able in a short time to make her all right again, provided he succeeded in keeping off fever. Having received this satisfactory answer to their inquiries, they returned to Rotherington in time to have a few hours' shooting before dinner.

In the evening, they discussed *pro* and *con*, whether Mark should disclose his coach adventure and its consequences to his father: and it was finally agreed to keep it a secret. Whether this decision was a wise one or not, may be doubted; but the chief motive with Mark in assenting to it was, that he could not but see that his uncle, notwithstanding his recent declaration to the contrary, was still in his heart as bitter against his father as he well knew his father was against him, and therefore he thought that the present was not a favourable time to introduce the subject of a reconciliation; whilst the Squire had adopted the same conclusion from a wish not to ask a favour from a party he was ill-disposed towards, and which moreover he thought would be refused.

At the time when Mark was overturned, he was on his way to L—— for the purpose of meeting another coach, which was to have conveyed him to the house of the father of a college friend about twelve miles beyond L——. He now agreed to spend two more days with his uncle, and then pursue his original course: after which he was to return home, and, if he could get his father's consent to his travelling scheme, he was to set off, his uncle promising to supply ample means, as he had before stated his readiness to do so.

The two days which Mark remained at the Hall were happy ones for the Squire. They passed the morning of the first in shooting; and on the second they rode together to meet the hounds. Old John Masborough was a well-known character in the field; and well pleased was his nephew to see the many friendly greetings he received at the cover side.

Not less was the delight of the uncle, when, in the ardour of a splendid run, he found his nephew still at his side, on the beautiful hunter, the pride

of his stud, which he had lent him, close to the tail of the hounds. One by one the field was decreased; and at last they and two others were left alone to contend for the honours of the brush. Already they could see the fox, with his colour deepened by the chace, drag himself slowly before the wearied pack. He crossed a small river, and was killed as he attempted to climb the opposite bank.

"Give me your reins," said the Squire to Mark, at the same time making a sign to him to hasten before one of the other gentlemen, who had already dismounted. Mark did so, sprung from his horse, and was up to his middle in the river in a moment. He forded it, and seizing the captured spoil, compelled the hounds to quit their hold. Then, returning, he threw the fox up the bank to his uncle, who stood with his knife ready to do the honours. The other gentleman then lent Mark a hand, and he was on the bank again, with the water streaming from him.

Suddenly the stranger looked down the river, and exclaimed, "Good God! where is Chessa-

lette?" At the same moment Mark perceived the horse of the gentleman, whom he had been so eager to anticipate, leaning over the bank, and immediately after he saw the rider himself in the water struggling. The bank was steep and clayey, and it was evident that the gentleman could not swim, and was in deep water. He was endeavouring in vain to grasp anything to secure him, as the stream hurried him on. Mark and the stranger ran to the spot, and the latter, throwing himself on the ground, leant over and strove to catch his friend. He did not succeed; and Mark saw no time was to be lost. He was an excellent swimmer, and, plunging into the stream below Chessalette, he caught the collar of his coat, and bringing him close under the bank, he raised him so much as to enable the stranger to hold him there. Mark then swam down till he found a sloping part of the bank, where he got out, and running up the side of the water, he lent his assistance together with his uncle, and the three by their united strength, drew out the exhausted youth. He had swallowed a good

deal of water, and had been exceedingly frightened; but not being long under water, he quickly recovered.

He said he had no suspicion the stream was so much deeper than it was where he saw Mark fording it, and he had plunged in, fully thinking it would be in his depth. He thanked his preservers, and particularly Mark. Then, addressing the Squire, he said, "Mr. Masborough is well known to me by sight; though I believe I have the advantage of him. I fear, owing to certain disputes, he will not be disposed in my favour, when I tell him my name is Chessalette!"

"The son of Sir Charles, I suppose?" said the Squire, and then added, "Know, young gentleman, I do not consider quarrels hereditary, '*quæ non fecimus ipsi, vix ea nostra voco,*' nor visit the sins of fathers upon sons, as my friend Mark here can prove full well; and I shall be glad to prove in your case, too, if you will return home with me and dine at the old Hall!"

The young man thanked him, but declined the offer.

"And you," said the Squire, "turning to the other, "who, after we have shared this well-run chase, should be no stranger—and, '*nunc ipsa pericula jungunt*,' will you come? Mark, try to persuade the gentleman."

Mark said he was sure his uncle would be delighted to receive him; but the stranger replied, "he was visiting a friend, who would expect him; in fact, he was staying at Mr. Lumley's, where Chessalette was staying too."

"Well, then," said the Squire, "we'll wish you good evening; for the sooner these two young competitors for the brush get their wet things off, the better."

Accordingly they mounted their horses, which all four stood congregated together, and rode away in two different directions.

As they rode home, the Squire inquired whether Mark had learnt the name of their new acquaintance, and he said he had not, except Chessalette's.

"Ay, Chessalette," said the Squire, "that's the baronet's only son, Mark; and heir to the title

and estates—as much as are left. He cannot be above nineteen."

"He looks older," said Mark.

"May be," said the Squire; "but he cannot be so. His age has not been altogether an indifferent subject to me. I have got the family pedigree at home, where his birth is regularly entered, and we'll look at it after dinner. By the bye, Mark, I never told you how ill his father has been behaving towards me—nor will I now; for the faster we ride, the better for you in your present circumstances. I fear you will catch a severe cold—'*frigus captabis opacum*,' ay?"

Mark laughed, and off they went as fast as their wearied horses could carry them.

When they arrived at the Hall, Mark lost no time in exchanging his wet clothes for dry ones, not omitting to put his feet into warm water; and, as he had continued in exercise from the time of his cold-bath, he did not suffer any ill consequences from it. His uncle circulated the bottle even more rapidly than usual, and as they sat before the fire after dinner, he piled large

pieces of wood on the grate, saying, half to himself, half aloud to Mark, "'*ligna super foco*,' ay, Mark? '*largè reponens*,' ay?" and then commenced his story of grievance, which he had kept from the morning.

"You must know, Mark, I paid for this estate £50,000; and old Chessalette had not very long given up possession and drawn the money, ere I was informed he had not the power of selling, but that it was entailed on his eldest son. A long, and not very friendly correspondence ensued, in the course of which he offered to guarantee his son's joining in cutting off the entail when he was twenty-one, for ten thousand pounds more; but though I consider the estate would still be a bargain, as he sold it in haste to raise the money, I would not agree; and the result is, that a bill has been filed in behalf of the heir, who, of course, being a mere boy, is not answerable for his father's dishonourable conduct. So, here am I involved in a Chancery suit, which is troublesome and expensive; but my lawyer tells me to be under no uneasiness as to the result, of which

there cannot be a doubt, and you see I take his advice. I don't look much like a suitor in Chancery—do I? Come, Mark, let us have a hit at backgammon. You left off a game a-head last night—but you had such throws! Just fetch the '*periculosæ plenum opus aleæ*,' as Horace calls the board, ay?"

Mark set the men, and this evening fortune was on the other side. The Squire was pleased with his victory, and his nephew made no ungracious remarks about his aces and his sizes and his doublets, but, wishing him good night, he "left him alone with his glory."

It was agreed that the Squire should take him to L—— in the carriage, as it would be convenient for his luggage; and it would be necessary to be off very early, in order to be in time for the coach that was to take him on to the Sileby's. Mark accordingly began to arrange his portmanteau, as much as he could over night, in readiness; but ere he retired to his bed, he threw on his dressing-gown, and entered the drawing-room. His uncle and he had spent the whole evening in bachelor

and bacchanal style in the dining-room, and Mark could not leave the Hall without taking his leave of the lady in the picture.

He stood before that most exquisite face with his arms folded, and breathless; and giving way to the fancies that came crowding into his brain, he exclaimed, "How exquisitely perfect are those beautiful features! how full of soul and sensibility those clear and lustrous eyes! How sweet the play of that beautiful coral bow, whose curve conveys the idea that it has often been bent into a smile. It was on such that Petrarch had been gazing, when he talked of the 'lampeggiar del angelico riso;' and yet can earth have any thing of such unalloyed loveliness? Oh! if I thought it did in truth hold such a treasure, I would travel to its farthest quarters to die at her feet; for, never could I hope to win aught so surpassing my deserts! Did not the youthful Milton wander forth to seek the beautiful girl, who had kissed his slumbers? I, too, will wander forth; and never shall my heart own the full spell of beauty, till

the print of this fair creature, stamped upon it, meets with its counterpart. Alas! there can be no such reality! This is but the spiritualized and superhuman combination of excellence, which the mighty, though unknown, artist, gathering from many, has here blended all in one. From many flowers he has selected the sweetest; from them he has expressed the richest essence, and that he has refined and sublimed into the very soul of——"

"Ha, ha, ha! the boy's verily mad or drunk! In love with a picture, ha, ha! Why, Mark, if it had not been a fancy piece, but a portrait of a real bit of flesh and bone, you might have gone Quixotting after the original, or have advertised for her; but now, '*atque animum picturâ pascit inani*,' ha, ha, ha!—I came for my large Horace, as I have mislaid my pocket one: there it is. Now, good-night, and be off to bed, or you'll be late in the morning. In love with Autumn, ha, ha, ha!"

The old Squire put the Horace under his arm,

and went laughing out of the room, while Mark, ashamed at being caught at his devotions, retired to his bed, and dreamed that the figure came out of the canvas, warm with life, and threw herself into his arms.

CHAPTER III.

THE next morning the Squire and his nephew were in the carriage before it was quite day-light. There was not a little raillery at the scene of the night before; and the Squire said to Mark—"Remember, young gentleman, you are not to fall in love with the Misses Sileby, if there are any. You must keep true to the picture, Mark—mark that. Whilst I was shaving this morning by candle-light—'*tondenti barba cadebat*,' you know—I bethought myself that perhaps young Sileby 'acts a brother's part,' and I wish to caution you not to be shelved too soon. You see what a jolly life lead we that bachelors be; I do as I like, live as I like, hunt, go abroad, and am accountable to nobody. You know, Mark, when you are lord of Rotherington Hall you may

had received that morning, and which almost amounted to a virtual promise, could not but be a pleasing topic for the reflections of a young man, who, romantic and unworldly as he was, was yet well enough aware of the advantages of a splendid income; and yet amidst all his castle-building, the ownership of the hall seemed only the adjective or appurtenant part of the prize, whilst the ownership of the picture was the substantive and real prize itself.

Much meditating on these things, and carried away by his imagination, Mark had not noticed the distance he had travelled, nor that the twelfth mile-stone was passed. "Here we are, sir," said the coachman, pulling up his horses, "that is Sileby Hill, and this is Mr. Sileby's Lodge. You will get off here, sir?"

Mark accordingly descended, and leaving his portmanteau in charge of the man at the lodge, who undertook to convey it to the house in ten minutes, he walked along the coach-road, which wound up the hill through the park. It was quite early in the day, and Mark had observed

do as you please, and perhaps you should marry then, to keep it in the family, and our name from perishing, '*nomenque erit indelibile nostrum*,' as Ovid said when he marked his shirts for the wash; but whilst I live, I desire you to tie yourself to nobody but me. I can't spare you; and so now mark my words, Mark, I never will consent to your marrying, and I'll leave Rotherington away from you if you do: another shall reign in your stead —'*barbarus has segetes.*' I never will consent to your marrying before I die—except to the lady in the picture."

"A bargain, my kind uncle! and long may I live single on these conditions."

The uncle and nephew parted at L——, and as Mark rode forward on the coach alone, he could not help recurring to his uncle's words. To say that no notion of his being likely to leave him something at his death had ever entered his head, would be untrue; especially, as he remembered that, even when a child, his uncle had talked of making a squire of him; but the strong hint that he was to be his heir, which he

had received that morning, and which almost amounted to a virtual promise, could not but be a pleasing topic for the reflections of a young man, who, romantic and unworldly as he was, was yet well enough aware of the advantages of a splendid income; and yet amidst all his castle-building, the ownership of the hall seemed only the adjective or appurtenant part of the prize, whilst the ownership of the picture was the substantive and real prize itself.

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some scarlet coats pass the coach, which led him to conjecture that the hounds were meeting somewhere in the neighbourhood, and about that time.

On reaching the house he found he had been quite right, as the servant told him 'the family and company were all gone to the cover to see the hounds throw off, but the ladies would be back very soon, he expected.' Mark hesitated whether he should walk in the direction of the place of meeting; but, on learning it was four miles off, and that he would have to go up very dirty lanes, unless he went a great way round by the carriage-road, he gave up the plan; and as he was a total stranger to the family, with the exception of the second son, Edward, his college friend, he did not feel inclined to borrow a horse, even if there should be one left in the stables. Accordingly he walked into the drawing-room, to await the return of the ladies.

The piano was covered with a profusion of modern Italian songs, and a very few English

ones; and the whole room was furnished in the most luxurious style of modern expenditure. There were two beautiful harps, together with sofas, ottomans, and couches, covered with the most magnificent patterns. The shutters, doors, and every part of the room were overspread with gilding. Immense glasses reached from the floor to the ceiling; and the most rare plants stood in stands up and down the apartment. On some of the inlaid tables were beautiful busts and figures of alabaster; on others, proof copies of the most admired prints. Looking out of the window, Mark admired a fine herd of deer; and every thing he saw around him gave an impression that money had not been spared.

At length, in about an hour, a carriage drove up to the door, and in a few minutes the ladies entered the room. Mark had to go through the ceremony of introducing himself, and Mrs. Sileby apologised for her son's not being at home to receive his visiter.

"Mamma," said a young lady, "I have undertaken to make a fine speech for Edward to Mr. Masborough."

"Well, then, do so, my dear; but first let me introduce the Misses Lumley to Mr. Masborough."

Mark bowed, and the lady continued—"I can assure you, sir, all these ladies are very much indebted——"

"Stop, mamma, you are infringing on my province," said Miss Sileby, putting her hand playfully to her mother's lips,—"My mamma was going to have thanked you for saving Mr. Chessalette. We have already heard, you see, Mr. Masborough, of your gallant exploit."

"For shame, Rosa," said Mrs. Sileby: "you have quite made Mr. Masborough blush."

"And with reason," said Mark, "for surely I ought to blush at having the common hunting occurrence of helping a comrade out of a scrape magnified into an exploit."

"Well," said Miss Sileby, "it is very consistent with true courage to underrate itself, but

we know all about it, and that it was not a common hunting occurrence; but, Mr. Masborough, what I had to say from Edward was this, that he has been waiting at home every day for you since the one on which we expected you; but that yesterday he dined at our friends', the Lumleys, who, you must know, live only two miles from us, and almost daily some of them are here, as you see, or some of us are there, and there he heard that you had stopped by the way at your uncle's; so, he was uncertain when you would be here, and accordingly he ventured to go out hunting to-day. But, before he went, he wrote you a few lines to hasten you, in case you should not come, though he expected you; and, what was very stupid, he directed them to your father's, notwithstanding his having just been informed of your being at Rotherington—and, that 's my message. Oh, no—he added, we were to entertain you, if you came to-day, and would not follow him; but he said you were to have one of his brother's horses, if you liked to try and

find the hounds, for he thought, if you came, it would be by the eleven o'clock coach. Do which you please. I and Laura Lumley are going out for a ride on horseback in an hour's time; Mamma and Miss Steady—I meant to say Miss Marianne Lumley, are going to pass the whole morning at home. So, you can choose between our society, and theirs, and your own." Having delivered her speech, the young lady caught Miss Laura Lumley by the waist, and gallopaded her out of the room.

"A full bill of fare, Mr. Masborough, has been set before you," said Mrs. Sileby. "We will leave you to a free choice; but I cannot help recommending you to take my son Sebastian's horse and look for the hounds and your friend Edward. I am sure you are heartily welcome to the horse, and need be under no scruples, as I know people sometimes are about borrowing hunters; for, Sebastian, who is really particular, said, when Edward asked him, 'by all means: I've heard what a bold rider your friend is, and if the horse should be lamed, it would be by

fair riding; so, tell him he must follow us, if he comes to-day;' and besides," continued Mrs. Sileby, "*entre nous*, I know Sebastian wants to sell the chesnut to Lord Branville, and his lordship would perhaps give his price if he saw him well ridden up to the hounds. Do go."

Mark hesitated: on the one hand, his love of the chase impelled him to the field, and his pride was touched to support the character of a bold rider, which he found he had acquired; on the other, there was the uncertainty of finding the hounds, who might have gone for miles in a direction which he might not be able to learn, there was the inducement of the young ladies' company, and also, and chiefly, notwithstanding what Mrs. Sileby had said as to the purchase he might be the means of bringing about, there was his horror of horse-borrowing. And here it must be remarked that that lady had two reasons for the advice she had given; one, which she had alleged, and which, coming in at the end of her speech, and ushered in with a *besides*, might well be taken for the very P.S. of her reasons,—

for your woman's real reason, and the one you will hardly persuade her from, is the one headed "besides,"—and also she had perceived, with the quick glance of a mother, that Mark's handsome person, together with the previously received report of his courage, had been by far too favourably viewed by one for whom she had other and loftier designs, and those, too, too near completion for her patiently to see them marred.

"Your son is very kind certainly, Madam," said Mark, "but I don't know what to say to it."

"Ah, now I see," said the lady, "that you are a scrupulous person: but remember you would really be conferring a favour on Sebastian, if you would show off his horse by your good riding. Come, I will order him, and by the time he is saddled you will be booted and spurred. Your portmanteau has been brought from the lodge, and is gone up stairs."

Mrs. Sileby rung the bell, and ordered Mr. Sebastian's chesnut horse to be got ready for

Mr. Masborough to hunt. Mark proceeded towards his room, not very alertly, for not very willingly. The fact is, indolence was the besetting sin of Mark, and, although he could display a great deal of energy and activity when he was roused, yet it was only at those particular times. The trouble of changing his dress, when he was so uncertain that it would be to any purpose, was a sad grievance. At that time it was a *sine quâ non* for a gentleman to take the field in the orthodox costume; the modern relaxation of the custom, which tolerates trousers, had not been introduced. Mark would rather have given up all idea of hunting, but Mrs. Sileby had determined that the chesnut should be shown off and the young lady should not. Mammas have not always the victory.

Mark met Miss Sileby and her two friends on the stairs. "Well, Mr. Masborough, what is the verdict?" inquired Miss Sileby.

"A nonsuit," said Mark.

"I am afraid we have a lawyer here," replied

the young lady, turning to Miss Lumley, "What does he mean?"

"I mean two things; first, that I must change my costume, and—"

"And so," interrupted Miss Laura Lumley, "a nonsuit means that a dress does not suit, and inclination perhaps is suited as little."

"Now Heaven defend," exclaimed Miss Sileby, "that my brother should have chosen for a friend a lawyer, and a punster, too! Surely, Mr. Masborough, this is a misinterpretation of Laura's?"

Mark shook his head, as pleading guilty.

"Then," cried Miss Sileby, pretending to cross herself and Miss Lumley, "'Angels and ministers of grace defend us!' I don't think, Laura, we can venture?"

"I dare," said Laura, "if Mr. Masborough will allow us. You must know, sir, we had intended to go to my father's, to ask him to ride with us to the High Wood, where we expect to see the hounds again. But as we are late, we were now coming down to ask you to escort us,

and to promise that we would be no incumbrance to you; for, if we should meet the hounds, you shall leave us, and the servant will take care of us and conduct us home."

Mark could not but assent to this proposal, and proceeded to his room with somewhat more alacrity than he had displayed before this meeting. He entered his bed-room, and as he opened his portmanteau, and rapidly metamorphosed himself into a Nimrod, he gave utterance to the following soliloquy:—"Deuced fine girls, all three of them! and—where did I put my boot-hooks? As for Miss Sileby, her manners are graceful in the extreme. So affable and easy—why, the good folks, who visit at the Rectory, look at each other like two bears newly introduced into the same cage for a full hour after they have been first presented—and here there has been no introduction at all, and yet she treats me like an old acquaintance! To be sure, Edward has spoken of me. Now, boots—by your leave. By the bye, what an admirable plan it is, to put one's boots and shoes into these separate holland

bags, instead of the old way of wrapping them up in innumerable folds of paper: one gets at them so readily, and, as the advertisement says, 'they don't soil the finest linen.' Rosa! a pretty name! but, after all, there is wanting in Miss Sileby the sensibility and tenderness and poetry of my Autumn! Heigho, sure I may cry 'Oh, I am fancy's fool!' That youngest little Lumley, too, is a lively creature—but oh, not like Autumn! and the eldest—delicate health, I think, has made her graver, and she seems to have some romance about her—but then she is decidedly inferior to the other two in beauty. Holloa! here is a hole in my new buck-skin glove!". He pulled on the glove nevertheless, torn as it was, and hastened down stairs.

In the drawing-room he found Miss Sileby and her mmama; for the young lady having worn her habit when they went out in the carriage after breakfast, had had hardly any alteration to make in her dress. As Mark opened the door, he heard Mrs. Sileby speaking in an angry tone, and he caught

the name of Lord Branville, and, though his appearance had stopped the dialogue, he could not but guess, from the countenances of both, that mamma and daughter had been discussing some topic whereon they had not very well agreed. It was, in fact, what he half suspected, the scheme of the two fair equestrians, which Mrs Sileby had been censuring, although he did not see why Lord Branville's name should be introduced. Of course, Mark took no notice, and appeared totally unconscious of anything of the kind. In a minute or two after himself, the two sisters entered the room, Laura equipped with hat, habit, and whip.

"Your horses are at the door," said Mrs Sileby, "so good morning. Come, Marianne, love, you know you are to finish reading 'Childe Harold' to me, whilst I go on with my work."

Mark assisted his companions on to their steeds, and they set off at a canter.

"We must make for the High Wood," said Miss Sileby; "Sebastian says that the fox comes there nine times out of ten, when they find at

Byham Gorse, which they were to try. They set off for the Gorse as we came away, as their first fox was killed in cover, whilst we were there."

"You are really quite a Diana," said Mark.

"No," said Miss Sileby, "only one of her nymphs. Laura here is *the* huntress. You should see her charge a hurdle!"

"Nonsense, Rosa," cried the young lady, "you will make Mr. Masborough think me quite an Amazon. You had better have said a double staked and bound fence at once!"

They rode on till they reached the High Wood; and Mark's experienced eye soon knew by the trampled state of the ridings, and the broken gaps, that the hounds had already been there. He expressed his opinion, and in a minute after it was confirmed by a farmer's boy, who came riding a shaggy pony, and told them the hounds were gone back towards Byham's Gorse. In this disappointment, and whilst they were discussing whether to follow or not, the sound of the pack in full cry all at once burst on their ears. The fox had been headed and was returning. Mark's

chesnut, already warmed with their canter, pawed the ground. His rider rose in his stirrups to look for the hounds; he saw them, and his eye flashed fire. Miss Sileby looked on his manly and animated figure with an admiring eye, and she and Miss Lumley exchanged a nod and a smile. Mark, turning quick round, perceived both. He was going to have pointed out the hounds, but instead, said laughingly—

"Ah, I see you are quizzing me! Of course, you will not attempt to follow?"

"No, you will be glad to get rid of us! Simmonds will escort us home," said Miss Sileby.

"They are coming this way: we must not move yet," said Mark; and he was right. The fox had passed close to them, unperceived, and the hounds now swept by, followed by the hunters.

"What! are *you* here?" exclaimed one of the foremost, addressing Miss Sileby, and whom Mark recognized to be the same gentleman that had assisted him in rescuing Mr. Chessalette.

"Yes, here we are, my lord," said Miss Sileby,

"under the care of Mr. Masborough, to whom let me introduce Lord Branville."

The parties named bowed to each other.

"I can't stop; good bye," said his lordship, and he dashed down one of the ridings.

Mark longed to follow, but hesitated. At that moment Sebastian Sileby passed, and seeing his sister and Miss Lumley, he pulled up. In an instant his eye was on his chesnut.

"Mr. Masborough, I suppose?" Mark bowed.

"Won't you ride?" he continued, "I 'll see the girls home—my horse is blown."

"Take your own chesnut, sir," said Mark.

"No, no; by no means. I wish you to ride, and I 'm tired. Don't lose a moment."

And as the owner of his impatient steed seemed in earnest, Mark said to Miss Sileby and Miss Lumley, "I go, then, leaving you in such safe hands," and was quickly out of sight.

"Rosa, dear," said Sebastian, as soon as Mark was gone, "you will not mind Simmonds taking you home? and Laura, I know, will excuse me. I want to see how the chesnut behaves ridden by

another." And Sebastian Sileby pursued the same path that Lord Branville, Mark and others had taken.

With the advantage of a fresh horse, it is not to be wondered that Mark soon removed the distance between himself and Lord Branville. They rode neck and neck close to the hounds for a considerable distance. At length, his lordship's horse showed symptoms of distress, and Mark took the lead.

"For the second time," cried his lordship, "you are before me."

"This time we did not start fair," said Mark; and the speed at which they were going and the increasing distance between them prevented further conversation. The hounds, however, came to a check, and finally lost their fox. By this time a great portion of the field had come up, and amongst the rest Sebastian and Edward Sileby. The latter now regularly introduced Mark to his brother. Mark expressed his astonishment at seeing Sebastian, as he had left him with the ladies.

"We can now ride home all together," said Sebastian to the other three. "Chessalette will be at the Hall by dinner time: he lamed his horse at the Eight-acre-wall, and was obliged to go home to Lumley's: come, our horses are not too tired to go across the country; we shall save full a mile, and I will be leader."

The young men set off at a trot, and on their way Edward informed Mark that they were going to have their house full of company. Suddenly they came to a wide brook, and Sebastian said he ought to have taken them down the next field, where the bank was lower, and they could have forded.

"Nay, let us not go round," said Lord Branville, and put his horse to the brook. The animal, tired, and not now possessed with the ardour of the chase, refused the leap, and turned short round.

"Do you try," said Sebastian to Mark. "If one horse goes over, the rest will follow."

Mark gave his horse the rein, and the brook was passed.

"Sebastian, I 'll give you your price," cried his lordship.

"Then the chesnut is yours," said Sileby.

The other horses now leaped the brook, and the party then pulled up, to examine the spot where the chesnut had alighted. All agreed it was a magnificent leap, and that two hundred guineas were anything but an extravagant price for such a performer. Mark begged his lordship to mount his own new horse and change, but Lord Branville said it was a pleasure to see him ridden as he was; and in this manner they arrived at the Hill. It yet wanted some time to dinner, and Edward took Mark round the garden, and to the billiard-house, where they amused themselves with playing and talking over their college exploits. Edward also confided to Mark, as a grand secret, the fact that Lord Branville, (who was a relation of their neighbours the Lumley's and frequently at their house, and was now on a visit there, together with his friend Chessalette,) was engaged to his sister Rosa, and likely to be married shortly; and further, that his lord-

ship was immensely rich, which was the more fortunate, as he thought otherwise he would not have been to his sister's fancy. He was proceeding to explain how his lordship would probably be still richer—for his mother had been the daughter of a French nobleman, and her property had been stolen by her guardian during the revolution, but that now there was a chance of recovering a great portion of it—when his story was interrupted by his father introducing a party into the billiard-room.

Mark had not been presented to that gentleman before, in consequence of his having been gone out shooting; an amusement which he had adopted latterly in preference to hunting, of which he was no longer able to bear the fatigue. One of the party he introduced was Mr. Charles Chessalette, who expressed great pleasure at meeting Mark. Another of the party was a Mr. Smith, who amused himself with betting on the players, when he was not one himself, yet seemed to like to play for money when he was; and he appeared somehow generally successful, although he laid it

all to good fortune, as he said he was "a sad bad hand."

As they walked back to the house, Edward gave Mark an outline of this gentleman's history. "Mr. Tigranes Plantagenet White Smith is the son of a gentleman who was a colonel in the army and member for a county in Ireland, in which he had large estates. But of what regiment and of what county deponent sayeth not. His mother was a Miss Dorinda Plantagenet of some castle, and her father had *naturally* his thousand a year. It is true, that slanderous people say—but of course it can't be true—that she first rejoiced in the name of Dorothy White, and was in the capacity of wife to a full private in a foot regiment, until *the colonel* promoted her to the bed she lately made, making it worth the while of her former proprietor to assert that they never were married. The fact that she had lived with the private is certain, and no doubt a strong proof of the reality of the colonel's rank; for, would the fair Helen have been yielded to any less? And the story of his great landed property is equally con-

firmed by the circumstance of his son Tigranes Plantagenet White Smith living like a gentleman, i.e., without any visible trade, and keeping his horse and gig! The two latter combine to bear him about from one friend's house to another's, and from one watering-place to another. He met the Lumleys at Harrowgate in the summer, and is now visiting at their house in the recognized character of suitor to the eldest daughter, Marianne, who will have a real *bonâ fide English* thirty thousand at least. He comes as their guest to our house. Some people give the other sister to Sebastian, and some to your humble servant." Laughing at these words, Edward put his finger to his lips, as enjoining secrecy: they entered the house, and went up stairs to dress for dinner.

CHAPTER V.

LITTLE did Mark, as he entered the drawing-room, know the part that was assigned to him! Mrs. Sileby was a very managing lady and a very vigilant mamma. When Lord Branville had visited the Lumleys, she had lost no opportunity of throwing her daughter in his way, and many had been the schemes she had formed for securing the prize, and dreadful her jealousy and anxiety on account of the Misses Lumley. She was determined those two young ladies should be united to her two sons; and that her daughter should be Lady Branville. Much pains had she taken in this laudable design; and although the engagement of Mr. Smith and Marianne was a drawback, yet she felt confident of securing Laura for one of her sons;

and great was her triumph at bringing about the principal part of her drama; the greater, as the difficulties had not been inconsiderable. Miss Sileby had been sufficiently alive to the advantages of title and fortune to second her mother's views; but his lordship had stood a long and arduous siege of flirtation, and held out like a Trojan against legions of Cupids and a prodigious discharge of Love's artillery of "nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles." He was fonder of the chase than the dance: a five-barred gate had more charms than the waltz, and a view-holloa more melody than the most melting cantata. But the summer had not been lost, and the lady had made a favorable campaign in the time for picnics in the morning, and strolls by moonlight in the evening.—Alas! at that season the voices of Towler and Jowler, of Ringwood and Whitefoot, of Belle and Dragon were mute; the guardian genii of the hunter were not nigh. Mrs. Sileby left the lady and the lord in a dark shady arbour one bright shiny day. The beams quivered, the

breezes gasped, the boughs trembled, "the birds sang love on every spray;" and the offer was made! Since that time the affianced pair had been much together, and the marriage had been all but on the point of taking place,—when an open season brought hunting in early, and his lordship had, ever since it commenced, been so engrossed by horses and grooms, that, whenever he descried Mr. Cheetham the attorney, to whom the settlements had been confided, approaching, he "stole away," and tried as many wiles as an old fox to escape.

Things were going on in this manner, his lordship coming over every non-hunting day from the Lumleys, and taking his love-affair very quietly and regularly, like his cigar, when Edward happened to inquire of his mother whether it would be convenient to receive a visiter of his? Mrs. Sileby readily assented; for it occurred to her that it would afford her an admirable chance of forwarding matters if she were to pique and spur his lordship with a rival. The plan was fully decided on between her daughter and her-

self, the young lady quite agreeing that "it was certainly time the business should be brought to a close, one way or the other." But when Mark made his appearance, and Mrs. Sileby saw the effect his handsome person had on her daughter, she trembled lest the very instrument of her plan should prove its defeat. Accordingly, when the young ladies had returned from their ride, she had a long private confidential discussion with her daughter—if confidential that could be called, where *each* party, though they trusted each other much more than either would have trusted any one else, yet kept back *something*, and endeavoured to give the other an erroneous impression on part of their matter of debate. Miss Sileby denied the degree of interest she really felt in the stranger; and Mrs. Sileby professed to believe her. And in fact she did think, that, though her daughter would have been well content had Mark been the heir of the Barony of Branville, yet, after all, she was not a person to give up a title for any feeling of romance. Here she was right. Had the young lady been called upon

then to decide, she would have chosen as her mother would have chosen for her; she would have stood firm to the peerage. But the deception she practised was the denial that there was any danger in pursuing their plan, when she felt conscious that more than danger was already incurred. Still, notwithstanding this consciousness, she resolved not to deviate from it; at the same time she no less resolved not to let it ultimately mislead her from the object with which she originally set out upon. She assured her mother "she might be quite easy, she was only pursuing the course they had agreed upon, of flirting with Mr. Masborough, to show his lordship that there were others, besides himself, who thought her not quite without attractions." With this assurance Mrs. Sileby appeared quite satisfied; and she added a hint, that "she hoped her daughter would not sacrifice the good of the family to any nonsensical notion of love, but that if she liked Mr. Masborough's society, she need not be debarred that when Lady Branville."

Before dinner, accordingly, Miss Sileby took

an opportunity of reverting to the topic of Mark's exploit in rescuing Mr. Chessalette, in which she contrived to make it appear that Lord Branville had only leaned over the bank and looked on, and that death would certainly have ensued, had not a more prompt person been present. Mark was appealed to, and he said his lordship had been the first to miss Mr. Chessalette and give the alarm; he had been the first to hold out a hand to save him, and, though the stream had borne him out of reach, he was again ready to help to raise him up the bank! Rosa only replied that Mark was very generous in giving away his merit to those who wanted it; and at that moment dinner was announced, and she, being much nearer to him than to his lordship, went with him into the dining-room, and there sat next to him. After dinner, she begged Mark to come early to the ladies, and, as they had been speaking of music, she promised to reward him with a song.

The plot of the ladies was not without some effect. Lord Branville could not but observe

the high favour in which the stranger seemed to stand with his betrothed. He felt a little uneasy when the promise of the song was given in his hearing, and he resolved not to bear a rival near the throne. As Rosa left the room with the rest of the ladies, he thought he had never seen her look half so beautiful. Strange it is, that we should need the eyes of others! that we should be blind to what is ever before us, till it is pointed out, or till we are threatened with its loss! Lord Branville was the first gentleman in the drawing-room that evening!

At first his lordship was very amiable, for he wished to eject the intruder; but he did not long pursue that course.

When he found that none of the other gentlemen followed him, and that the field was his own, he could not help acting the conqueror. He leaned upon a sofa, and sweeping a string or two of Rosa's harp, he said, "It is a pity, Rosa, your sweet strains, so kindly *volunteered*, should be slighted. You say I've no ear, but I'll listen to you, if you'll have me for an auditor, for want of

a better. Is Mr. —— I forget—his—name—very musical?"

"Oh, very!" was the reply of the young lady, who cast a glance to her mamma—"he is all ear! —all soul!"

"All fiddlestick!—I beg you ten thousand pardons, my dear Miss Sileby," continued his lordship, "for using such an expression; you must excuse it. You know you say I have no ear, and —and—and comparisons are odious."

"Well, my lord," said Rosa, "to punish you and to reward Mr. Masborough, I will sing when he comes."

"Reward!" said Lord Branville, "I thought the song was to reward his early coming. Surely, I might claim it, if I chose?"

"Here he comes," exclaimed Rosa, as the door opened; but—Mr. Smith entered.

"I'm sorry for your disappointment," cried his lordship. "Will Smith do, with me, for audience? Smith, I suppose you are musical?"

"Oh very, my lord!" said Smith, who had

spoken in the affirmative to all his lordship had said ever since they met.

"Then do try and persuade Miss Sileby to honour us with one of her songs." Mr. Smith bowed beseechingly to the lady.

"Why, man, you beg like a poodle," cried Lord Branville, laughing at his own simile.

"Ha, ha, ha," said Mr. Smith, laughing too, though far from relishing the comparison.

His lordship continued joking with Miss Sileby in the same strain, which he intended to be very provoking, till the door again opened, and Mark, Edward, and Mr. Chessalette, entered the room. Mark had remained in the dining-room, out of a feeling of delicacy towards Lord Branville. He knew from Edward of his engagement, and though he felt flattered by the attention of Miss Sileby, and really desirous of listening to her singing, he had no wish to disturb two lovers for his own gratification. When, therefore, he entered the room, he did not join their group, but approached Mrs. Sileby, who was receiving a lec-

ture in Phrenology from the eldest Miss Lumley.

"You have the organ of *constructiveness* well developed."

"You shall tell me no more just now, Marianne," said the lady. "Expound Mr. Masborough's skull."

"May I?" inquired Miss Lumley, addressing Mark.

"By all means, and, thank you," said he; "I shall be glad to be told my faults."

"You will have few to be told, I can say boldly at once, from the general outline," said the young lady. "To begin, here is *tune* extremely prominent; and *benevolence*, and *causalty;* let me see"—and she turned to consult her book.

Mr. Smith had conceived an antipathy to Mark the moment he saw him. He suspected that Edward would make no favourable report of him, and that he would not stand well in Mr. Masborough's books; he had also declined betting, and excused himself from playing with him. Moreover, he saw that Mark was not a fa-

vourite of Lord Branville's, but that Mr. Smith was an aspirant to the favour of that nobleman; and now, to crown all, he beheld him in attendance on the lady he himself intended to marry. The thought came into his head, too, that he might lose the thirty thousand pounds, and, as he knew that, if he did, he was a ruined man, he viewed the intruder with jealous and suspicious eyes.

Whilst Miss Lumley was demonstrating that Mark was endowed with all good organs, and no bad one, except *number* 1, her sister Laura was playing on the piano, and Edward Sileby turning over the leaves of her music for her. At length she struck up a favourite waltz, and Rosa, dancing up to the piano, exclaimed, swinging round and suiting her action to the utterance—"Come, Edward, waltz with me, waltz with me, waltz with me—Lord Branville will not, or cannot waltz. Does Mr. Masborough?

"Yes, yes, he does, I've often seen him," said Edward, escaping from her hold. Mr. Smith had already whirled off Miss Lumley, thinking it a good opportunity to remove her finger from Mark's

bumps; and Mark had no escape from waltzing with Miss Sileby. Lord Branville bit his lip, and turned over the pages of an album, where by ill luck he found the well-known lines on waltzing, beginning, "What! the girl I adore by another," &c. He pointed to them, and held out the book to Mrs. Sileby.

The fond parent said nothing, but shook her head. She took care, however, when her daughter stopped, to prevent her recommencing the dance, by desiring her to sing. Miss Sileby sat down to her harp, and chose a little song, called

LOVE'S AUCTION.

1.

Here are some hearts to sell—
Which will you buy?
This one will love you well,
Till trouble's nigh:
Under success's sun
Warmly its streams will run,
But, when that sweet time's done,
And winter winds sigh,
Then, wrapt in icy fold,
Love 'twill repay with cold.
Who 'll bid? 'Tis scarce worth while.
Going—gone—for A SMILE.

2.

Come, here 's another lot:
Who bids for this?
This heart will tremble not
At First-Love's kiss!
This heart no trouble knows
For its own or other's woes,
Sun nor shower melts its snows,
Sorrow nor bliss:
Its transports ne'er annoy;
It brings no grief, it wakes no joy.
Who bids? I 'll give ONE TEAR.
Going—gone: 'tis very dear!

3.

Here is another heart
Tender and soft,
Passion's streams from it start,
Many and oft;
Sympathy ever dwells
In its pure chrystal wells;
But oh! its current swells,
When, rising aloft
With calm power, a gentle breast
Charms it to sweet unrest.
Who bids? Will no one buy?
Going—gone—for A SIGH!

At the third verse the fair siren in a marked manner withdrew her glance from Lord Branville

and turned it upon Mark, at the same time changing her mirthful tone into one of deep and tender sweetness. The vexation on his lordship's countenance was so ill concealed, that Mark felt very uncomfortable at the consciousness that he had made another so; and, though he could not without rudeness withdraw his attention from a song which had been promised to him, the moment it was over he expressed his thanks, and returned to Miss Lumley and her book on Phrenology. Mr. Smith had taken his station by that lady, and was disputing the accuracy of her lore, inasmuch as she said that *causalty*, *comparison*, *ideality*, *tune*, and several other organs, which he claimed a right to, were found wanting. As the young lady observed upon the marked difference of the structure of his brow and Mark's, he gave the latter a glance, compared to which the look of a parturient she-bear would be amiable.

Late in the evening, Mr. Sileby, Mr. Lumley, and Sebastian Sileby, came into the drawing-room, all three visibly what would be called in

low life "worse for liquor." Sebastian had been playing the amiable to Laura's father in his own way in the dining-room, whilst his brother had been levelling his assiduities at the young lady in the drawing-room: and the result of the bacchanalian scheme had been, that old Lumley pronounced him a jolly good fellow, his father's own son, and not like his brother, a hermit. Sebastian was not too far gone to lose sight of his interests, and therefore he contrived to get the old gentleman apart, whilst his heart was open, and whisper his wish that he would speak a good word for him to Miss Laura.

"Come here, Laura," exclaimed Mr. Lumley, acting on the impulse of the moment.

Laura left Edward, with whom, although her playing had been stopped by Rosa's singing, she still continued to turn over the leaves of her music-book, while he in a low voice, but not without emphasis, seemed to read the words before him, but uttered others,—and went to her father. She saw the state he was in, so easily distinguishable

by the tone of voice, and she wished to prevent the necessity of his calling for her twice. Edward followed her with his eye.

"Laura," said Mr. Lumley,—"I say—Laura," and the last word was sent out with a kind of jerk.

"My dear papa," said the young lady, taking his hand, and turning round to beckon her sister, who, however, did not see her, "will you go to bed—it is so late?"

"Bed, you young slut!" said Mr. Lumley, "I'll bed you! Talking of which, Laura,—I say—talking of which—makes me say, Laura—go with Sib into that window-seat,—he's got something to say to you—go it, Sib." Mr. Lumley threw himself into a chair, which fortunately had arms, or he would have been extended on the other side of it on the floor.

Sebastian took Laura's hand, and was leading her to the window-seat, when Edward came to her and said he thought her father seemed a little poorly, and that she had better persuade him to retire.

Sebastian was annoyed at the interruption, but his head was not clear enough to suggest any diversion; and Laura and Edward returned to her father. By this time, Miss Lumley had seen what was going on, and joined her sister in persuading Mr. Lumley that he had one of his usual headaches, and should go to bed. Mr. Lumley, conscious of his state, but thinking they were not aware of it, pleaded guilty to the headache, took the offered candle, and, leaning on Laura's arm, steadied his course to the door.

Mrs. Sileby, perceiving that her husband and son were not in a much better condition, contrived to break up the party by hinting to the young ladies that they would spoil their good looks if they sat up so late.

As Mark was preparing for bed, Edward came into his room, and they had a long gossip, which included all their college exploits, and the events of that day and evening.

"How drunk my brother seems," said Edward, "and old Lumley:—did you hear them speaking about Laura?"

"No," replied Mark; "I was attending to my own bumps."

"Why," said Edward, "you must know, Laura had accepted me for her own true knight, exactly one minute before her papa had accepted my brother for his son-in-law. So, there will be a case of rivalry. I bespeak you for an ally, Mark; for, really, I think I may trust you in Laura's case. If it were Marianne's or Rosa's either, you would be dangerous. They are both evidently bitten."

"Nonsense," said Mark.

"You may say nonsense," replied Edward, "but you know better. Both Smith and Lord Branville are as jealous as they can be, I see. As I came up stairs, I saw Branville call him into his dressing-room, and heard them mention your name."

"Never mind, Edward, they may say what they please of me; I am no rival to either. I admire your sister very much, but I wear certain invisible and enchanted armour; therefore I am heart-whole! Good night; we will hold a council of war in the morning,—how to make a *Laureate*

of you;" and, as Mark said these words, he shook his friend by the hand, and was left alone.

He was roused from the slumber into which he had quickly fallen, by a tap at his door, and on his speaking, it was opened. It was Edward, looking excessively agitated. "Mark," he exclaimed, "such a piece of villany!"—

"What is the matter?" inquired Mark.

Edward laid down his candle, and sat on the foot of the bed.

"My sister shall never marry such a villain."

Mark begged him to explain; and Edward told him that, on leaving him, he had gone back to the drawing-room for a piece of music, to which he was going to have put some words for Laura, and on his return he perceived Mr. Smith's door still open, and that he was not yet come to his room. As he passed Lord Branville's dressing-room, an impulse of curiosity he could not resist or account for, (as he had never done, or even felt himself tempted to do such a thing before,) induced him to listen, and he heard Lord Branville and Mr. Smith conversing in an under-

tone. He could not hear many of their words, but collected enough to convince him that Smith was undertaking to insult Mark on the first opportunity, if the latter ever interfered with the *affairs* of either of them again, and he also heard his lordship say, that he would give him a cheque for a hundred pounds in the morning.

Mark expressed his great surprise at Lord Branville's conduct, so different from what he had given him credit for: though he had thought him not very sensible, he was far from believing him capable of such baseness. Smith, they both agreed, would do any thing for fee and reward.

They consulted long what course was to be adopted. Edward at first was for putting his sister on her guard; but the mode in which he had acquired his information was an obstacle to his using it; and besides, he shared in the family's ambitious desire of a high connexion, even in spite of his knowledge of the worthlessness of the connecting link. He therefore said he thought that affair must proceed, as

his father and mother had set their hearts on it. But he determined to leave no means untried to save the sister of his Laura from becoming the prize of the Irish bully. He advised Mark to avoid the latter, even, should it be necessary, by terminating his visit for that time; for, he remarked, it would be hard for him to have to fight for two Helens, neither of whom he cared for, and whom he had only known for a day. Mark said he would not give Mr. Smith any opportunity for quarrelling with him; for, though he should not have the moral courage to decline a challenge actually received, he would avoid a duel by every means short of dishonour. It was agreed that he should not show any attention to either of the ladies, and then Edward thought there would be no risk of a collision; and so once more they parted, promising each other to think of some means of rescuing Miss Lumley from Mr. Smith.

CHAPTER V.

In pursuance of the plan agreed upon, Mark and Edward, the next day, joined Mr. Sileby in his shooting, and in the evening Mark abstained from paying Marianne Lumley or Miss Sileby any particular attention. He however soon felt it irksome to act under restraint; and when he hinted to Edward that he had almost a mind to make furious love to Miss Lumley to provoke the Irishman at once, it was all his friend could do to dissuade him. Lord Branville, who had hardly quitted Rosa all the day, was now at her side; and Mrs. Sileby wore a smile of self-satisfaction as she spoke in a confidential tone to her husband. Sebastian and Edward had long been convinced of each other's preference for Laura; and, after

what happened last night, the former was quite aware that if he did not beat off his brother, he must soon retreat himself. He was unremitting in his attentions to Mr. Lumley. Edward was equally so to his daughter. Mr. Smith was most assiduous in urging Miss Lumley to appoint an early day for becoming Mrs. Smith.

All seemed paired, except Mark and Chessalette. The two young men entered, therefore, into conversation, but, as there was one topic on which they were forced to preserve silence on account of the opposing interests of the father of the one and the uncle of the other, they could not feel perfectly at ease. At length, however, something led them to speak of Rotherington.

They were talking of a painting of the mother of Marianne and Laura, which had been taken from a cast after her death and from memory, by Sir Thomas Lawrence; which induced Mark to observe, "that, of course, then Sir Thomas had known her?"

"To be sure, he did," Chessalette replied.

"She was visiting at Rotherington for a week at the same time with him. Perhaps you have noticed a painting of his there?"

"The Seasons?" inquired Mark, "I thought it was his style, but was not sure, on account of the grouping."

"Ah!" said Chessalette, "that was not his taste, but done after the design of two not very skilful amateurs, being no other than that very Mrs. Lumley and my own mother. They first sketched it all out between them in pencil—"

At this moment a footman brought Mark a packet, and said the bearer was waiting for an answer. He was the under-groom at Rotherington Hall. Mark saw the direction was his uncle's writing, and he felt convinced something was amiss. He begged Mr. Chessalette would excuse him for a few minutes, and hoped he would finish the history of the picture in which he felt a most particular interest, and which Chessalette promised to do. Mark went to the inner drawing-room and opened his packet. It

contained three letters: one from his uncle first caught his eye, and it was to this effect:

"My dear boy,

"You will see by the enclosed that there is a devil of *a bear loose!* It came by post to-day, and as I saw it was from your father, and the direction proved he knew you were here, I thought it might require to be forwarded—so, opened it, in which I found I only imitated that worthy person's example, who had had the meanness, without any reason, to open yours. I hope you will think I had good reason. Joseph leads a horse, which he will leave for you to come here on in the morning—*'ubi crastinus ortus Extulerit Titan,'* you know; and he can bring your bag. Your other things can come by coach. Don't go home without coming by Rotherington. I must see you. *Vale et salve!*

"J. M."

Mark was afraid to open his father's letter, and, to put off the evil moment, he took up the

other first. It was the one which has been mentioned before to have been written by Edward Sileby, and misdirected to the Rectory, instead of to Rotherington. It was as follows:

"DEAR MASBOROUGH,

"I dined yesterday at the Lumleys', and there heard of your good run and your valuable services to Chessalette, who is a friend of ours, and I think you have heard me speak of him. I have, however, not talked so much of him as I should if there had not been a law-suit between your family and his. I was right glad to hear you were at your uncle's, and so hope it is all right between your governor and the old boy again. But of course it is, or you would not be where I send this, *hopping* to see you soon. You must come; we are going to be so gay; and, when the fun is over, you can go back and finish your visit at Rotherington. I venture out hunting to-day. Of course we shall not see you out, as the meeting-place is not on the Rotherington side

of the county. Come off as soon as you get this. In haste.

" Your's ever,

" Edward Sileby.

" P.S.—I have lots of news, &c. to tell you."

Mark then slowly opened the letter from his father, and found it to the following effect :

" Sir,

" I should not have opened a letter directed to you, if I had not happened previously to hear of an accident having befallen the coach you travelled by. I concluded, however, that you had escaped unhurt, as I thought, had it been otherwise, I should have been sure to have been informed. But when a letter came for you, as I knew by the crest, from Sileby Hill, where I concluded you were, I felt all the anxious alarm of a parent, and feared you had not arrived there. To relieve myself from suspense, I made bold to break the seal, and found indeed that you were not there, but had taken up

your quarters with the rancorous, though wealthy, enemy of your father! I quote two lines from your young friend's letter—'and so hope it is all right between your governor and the old boy again. But, of *course* it is, or you would not be where I send this.' So much a matter of *course* does that young man consider filial duty! I regret that his friend is not endowed with the like good principles. You are, sir, of age; you may choose which side you will take: you may maintain your allegiance to nature, or enlist under the glittering banner of self-interest.

"I shall take your not instantly coming hither as a proof of your preferring the latter; in which case, that your absence may be permanent, is the only further request of your father,

"GEORGE MASBOROUGH."

To say Mark did not feel hurt by this letter would be untrue; but, at the same time, it would be equally so to affirm that his grief was

of any poignant nature. Beautifully has the poet said,

> "And to be wroth with one we love
> Doth work like madness in the brain!"

But Mark's natural affection had been so checked and nipped by long-continued coldness on the part of his father, and his temper so severely tried by his favouritism and undisguised preference for his other children, especially his second son, George, that his eldest-born, the earliest heir to his affections, having for many years met at the Rectory with nothing but slight, mortification and unkindness, had long ceased to find that home a scene of happiness. Against his brother George, too, he could not avoid entertaining feelings neither cordial nor fraternal: and these had been increased on the occasion of Mark's leaving college, at which time his father had transferred the greater part of his allowance to George, who had succeeded him at Cambridge.

Mr. Masborough wished Mark to enter the church, thinking that by that means he would be quickly settled away from home, and at the

same time cease to be any pecuniary tax upon himself. To this plan Mark had strong objections. He felt conscientious scruples against clothing himself with such a responsibility, and yet he was aware that he was too indolent to pursue either of the other professions, of law or physic, with a probability of success: in addition to which, he knew his father would not supply the funds which for many years these would require. He turned his thoughts therefore to the army; and though his father had at first objected strongly to purchasing him a commission, yet he had latterly entertained and discussed the project.

Mark therefore had been accustoming himself to look forward to a release from the scene of his annoyances; and he thought the present breach with his parent would only hasten the consummation.

As he was folding up the letter, his friend Edward came up to him, and at once saw by the expression of his countenance that all was not well.

His eye fell also upon his own hand-writing on the direction of one of the letters on the table, and he inquired anxiously how it had reached Mark. Mark was unwilling to tell him that he had made mischief, however unintentionally; so he folded up the packet, and said, "he would explain all by and bye, and that he should be obliged to terminate his visit before breakfast in the morning." More than ever uneasy, Edward pressed for an explanation, and Mark at length gave it.

A long discussion followed between the friends, including not only Mark's situation with respect to his father and uncle, but also Edward's prospects as to Laura, and Mr. Smith's as to Marianne Lumley. Edward regretted he should be left alone to watch the progress of that worthy.

On Edward's announcing to his mother that his friend had received letters which would compel him to leave them abruptly, that lady politely expressed her regret. It was curious to see which the approaching loss of his

company had upon those present. Lord Branville and Smith exchanged looks of no little satisfaction, while Marianne Lumley turned very pale, and appeared to be quite occupied with her book. Miss Sileby happened to be absent: she had run out of the drawing-room to her own apartment for a box of harp-strings, as she was going to sing, and her harp wanted a wire.

On her return she saw the groups had shifted, and heard her mother saying, she "was really quite grieved."

"What for?—what is the matter, mamma?" she inquired.

"Why, my dear, Mr. Masborough is going to leave us early in the morning."

"Going!" cried Rosa, with a tone of deep disappointment, and then turned to Mark.

"I am sorry to say," said Mark, "I have just received a summons from home."

"Oh, no, you must not leave us," earnestly exclaimed Rosa; "indeed you must not, unless something is the matter. Do stay."

Lord Branville bit his lip, and looked towards

Mr. Smith; and the latter, interpreting the look into an order to interfere, said he was sure Mr. Masborough would stay if it were possible, when he was invited in so flattering, so pressing, so very marked a manner.

"I would indeed, sir," said Mark, eyeing him in no very complimentary manner: "it is certainly hard to tear one's self away when at once solicited to stop by one"—and he bowed to Rosa, "who could have detained Adonis from the chase, and one," and he bowed to Mr. Smith, "who surpasses Adonis himself."

Lord Branville joined in the laugh which followed the remark on Mr. Smith's dress, which certainly partook rather more of the profusely ornamental style than the chastely elegant, and might be called the "florid gothic." Never knight armed himself more carefully for the field, than had Mr. Smith equipped himself for the conquest of the heiress. A scarlet underwaistcoat; a waistcoat of blue and silver, twined over with chains to watch and glass; rings on both hands; tights; silk stockings of most in-

tricate and elaborate pattern, and bordered white pocket handkerchief, scented with the choicest products of his namesake in Bond Street, were part of his paraphernalia. It was no doubt in very bad taste, almost equally bad with the dress itself, for Mark to make so personal an attack, but the provocation was very great; and Mark, who, it must be owned, was by no means a model of mental perfection, was previously in an irritable state with regard to Mr. Smith, on account of the resolution he had taken to avoid any collision with him. Lord Branville made a sign to Smith not to reply; for he thought that gentleman would only show off his rival to advantage, if they should come to a "keen encounter" of the tongue, and on the morrow they would be left alone masters of the field.

Nothing further was said respecting the attire of Mr. Smith, except indeed that Miss Lumley took an opportunity of whispering Mark a reproof, and saying she could not have believed "a philosopher would have committed such a *faux pas*." Mark disclaimed the title, and owned his error,

but pleaded the provocation. Their discussion was stopped by Rosa's beginning to sing, and again Mark was conscious that the words were selected for him. It was a song of a lady parting from her lover:

1.

And must thou go, my own true knight,
And be absent long and far?
Oh! think of the eyes thou hast called so bright,
When thou look'st on our favourite star,
And believe they are turn'd on that gentle light
In the faith that so thine are!

2.

And thus, though thou art far away,
Our souls in thought shall meet
In that beautiful orb of celestial ray,
And hold communion sweet,
Till the bless'd day comes when I hear thee say,
"Lo, thy lover is at thy feet!"

3.

When that day shall come and thee restore,
And end my tears and sighs,
Oh, breathe me a vow that thy warfare 's o'er;
And, content with glory's prize,
Thou never away wilt wander more
From these enamour'd eyes!

When Rosa came to the end of the song, she fixed her large dark eyes upon Mark; and then, slowly withdrawing them while she struck a few notes that concluded the air, she rose from her harp.

As the party separated for the night, Mr. and Mrs. Sileby invited Mark to return, if he should find it in his power, in a few weeks, she being quite resolved that before that time there should be no risk of any rival's robbing her daughter of the title of Lady Branville. Mark could make no engagement, for he could not tell what arrangement he might come to with his father; and he took his leave of all the party, save Edward, who undertook to ride part of the way with him in the morning.

At an early hour the two friends were trotting down the hill of the park at Sileby. They promised to send each other frequent accounts of the state of their respective affairs. Mark told Edward the story of his falling in love with the picture at Rotherington; at which the latter laughed heartily, and said he supposed it was that which

had been the talisman that had rescued him from falling a victim to Rosa's charms. To this Mark nodded assent. Edward said he should like to see the painting in question, and indeed the Hall itself, of which he had heard much from the Lumleys, who used to visit the Chessalettes there; and he added, he thought he should ride over and see it some time when he could be sure the old Squire was from home; "but, one day or other," he continued, "I shall come there pretty frequently." Mark took no notice of this hint, for he had a great objection to entertain the idea of his ownership of the Hall, since it presupposed the death of the giver. At length they parted, Edward returning home, and Mark riding on to Rotherington alone.

He found his uncle full of anger against his father: "What can he mean by daring to call me his rancorous enemy—me, his benefactor? I it was who placed him in the position where he is: he was ungrateful,—I forgave him; again and again I was reconciled. Now we have been long parted—true, but how have I shown rancour? I

have injured him in no way. I have neither spoken to him, nor of him. His is the rancour—his, the parson's—the man of God—the divine's. '*Tantæne animis cœlestibus iræ!*' ay, Mark? Well, boy, what say you to the 'allegiance of nature,' or 'the glittering banners'—'*utrum horum mavis, accipe*'—ay, which, Mark? The parson was metaphoric enough for a charity sermon. Out on such hypocrites! But I won't say all I think before you, boy—'*maxima debetur puero reverentia*,'—ay, Mark!"

"Thank you, dear sir," said Mark, "my father has used neither of us well; but still he is my father."

"Right, boy," said the Squire; "and now I 'll tell you what I propose:—just this, that you write to your father, telling him you came here by accident, and continued, because you saw no good reason to the contrary, and could not believe that he, a clergyman, would be so unchristianlike, and malevolent and rancorous, and—"

The Squire stopped, perceiving that Mark's muscles were giving way to laughter; and he could not help joining in it himself.

"Why, you dog, what are you grinning at? '*Quid rides?*' as Horace says."

"Only, my good uncle," said Mark, "I was wondering how my father would like my collection of epithets."

"Then, I suppose," said Mr. Masborough, "you don't think that the right sort of letter."

"Not exactly," said Mark.

"Well, then," rejoined the Squire, "compose it yourself, any how; and stay here till it is answered."

"Perhaps it would be better for me to go and explain all," replied Mark, "as my father makes such a point of my returning immediately; and when he hears every thing, I dare say he will really have no objection to grant me leave of absence."

To this arrangement, after some discussion, the Squire assented; and as Mark seemed to think a prompt obedience might propitiate his father, the Squire ordered his gig, and said his servant should drive him to N——, whence he could walk home, that being only four miles farther.

Whilst the gig was being got ready, Mark took the opportunity of going to his room, and from

thence to the drawing-room, to feast his eyes on the beautiful object of his admiration. Every time he looked upon that exquisite face, he seemed to discover a new charm, some fresh trait of loveliness, which had escaped his previous observation; as, when we have long fixed our gaze on the deep blue firmament of the night, new stars, and yet new ones, seem to come forth, to take their places by those we saw before. But he dare not stay, for fear his uncle should guess where he was, and catch him a second time in a situation which he could not but be conscious must seem very absurd to a third party.

The gig was at the door; the Squire squeezed Mark's hand, and bade him remember he was of age and his own master, and though he did not want to preach disobedience, he hoped he would not agree to cut his old uncle. Mark assured him he would not assent to any such unreasonable proposition, and ran down the hall steps. He had just touched the horse with the whip, when a servant called him back, and said his master had

something very particular to say, which he had omitted. Mark leaped out of the gig, and hurried back to the breakfast-room.

"Oh, Mark, shut the door," said the old Squire with a very serious countenance, "you have quite neglected to—"

"What, what, my dear sir?" inquired Mark, somewhat alarmed.

"You were going away without saying good bye to Autumn—'*supremumque vale, quod vix au—au*'—ha, ha, ha!"

They both laughed: Mark said he had not forgotten, and ran out of the room.

As he drove from the Hall, the smile died on his countenance, and a cloud came over it—he thought of the Rectory. On, however, he drove, and at no very tardy pace: on the contrary, he seemed to wish to meet his unpleasant trial, and to have it over. The maxim from Pope—

"The darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have pass'd away,"

occurred to him, and he felt its truth: but as

the distance lessened, his anxiety increased, and when he reached N—— he felt himself in a state of great agitation. Mark was not yet a citizen of the world; he had so little learnt to throw a veil over his feelings, that, as he gave up the reins to the servant, preparatory to getting out of the gig, the man, no very profound observer, could not help inquiring "whether he felt unwell?" Mark assured him he was quite well, and, rousing himself, he set off for the Rectory on foot, having first ordered the man, according to an agreement he had made with his uncle, to wait at N—— till the evening, in case he should have any letter, descriptive of his interview, to send by him.

Mark was received at the Rectory with more apparent cordiality on the part of his father than he had expected. The fact was, that gentleman had seen the coachman of the CELERITY, and inquired the particulars of the accident, since he had written to his son; and the driver had not failed to dwell on Mark's reluctance to go to the Hall for assistance. He was therefore quite satis-

fied that he had formed no premeditated design of renewing his acquaintance with the Squire, in disobedience of his commands.

Mark was much surprised at the subject he had so much at heart not being introduced, and he was quite resolved to take the present opportunity of bringing his own situation and plan of life to a crisis. Accordingly, he followed his father into his study, stated the fact of the upset, and all that had happened subsequently, up to the receipt of his father's letter; and added, that he was desirous of not giving offence to his father, but that he hoped he would not insist upon his breaking off all intercourse with his uncle, since it had been so renewed. His father told him dryly to please himself, as he knew the conditions. Mark was beginning to say something about keeping up animosities, when he was cut short by his father's saying, it ill became him to lecture where he ought to obey. The discussion grew warm, and ended without Mark's obtaining any definite answer as to the purchase of a commission.

Mark wrote a few lines to the Squire, telling him what had taken place, and that he was resolute not to give up his kind uncle; and he despatched a boy with the letter, with orders to deliver it to the servant at the inn at N——. His younger brothers and sisters seemed half afraid to speak to him, and he could not help fancying that they must have heard him blamed in his absence. One of them, however, a boy of about ten years of age, the youngest of the family, late in the evening took a walk with him round the garden, and then proposed "to show him the beautiful horse papa had bought for brother George to take to Cambridge for his health." With a bitter feeling of jealousy did Mark hear of this proof of parental indulgence to *the* favourite—an indulgence which he, the eldest son, had never received: his riding propensities had been checked, not encouraged. But when he entered the stable and saw a magnificent horse, nearly thoroughbred, and which he knew could never have been bought for less than eighty or a hundred guineas, he thought of his own curtailed

allowance, and muttered to himself—"I pay for this!"

"You, brother Mark!" exclaimed the boy, catching but not comprehending the words, "Oh no; papa pays:—he gave Mr. Ginger, the horse-dealer, a hundred and ten guineas, and half a guinea to Robert the groom."

"The devil he did!" said Mark.

"Yes; and that is not the only present George has had since you have been out. Poor old Mrs. Sellwood came here in her carriage last week, and gave him a beautiful double-barrelled gun, because he was christened after her."

"You little goose, what do you mean?" said Mark, much surprised at what he heard.

"Why, I mean," said the boy, "she was his god-mamma."

"His!" exclaimed Mark, "she was mine!"

"O no; papa told her she was George's.—I heard him myself. Do you know she is so old, she did not know who it was, till Pa' told her. She said she had brought it a present for her dear godson; but her memory was so bad, she

forgot whether his name was Peter or Paul; and papa laughed, and said it was neither; and she laughed, and I laughed, and George laughed; and then she guessed Matthew, and then she guessed Theresa, because that was her own name, and he was christened after her. So you see what I meant by saying George was christened after her."

"I do, indeed: go on," said Mark.

"Well, and then, you know, papa and George laughed still more," continued the boy; "and at last papa left off laughing, and said to her, '*this* is your godson, and his name is not Theresa, but George;' and Mrs. Sellwood said, 'Bless him, by any name; but I thought it had been a Scripture name, I 'm sure. But I must have it written down. I 've brought him a present, and there shall be another some day for George—my godson George.'"

"Jacob, you mean," said Mark, in a tone of violent emotion. His little brother stared, and wondered he did not laugh at Mrs. Sellwood's blunders.

Mark paced rapidly up and down the gravel road in front of the stable; so rapidly, that his little brother was kept on the run. At this unpropitious moment, his brother George unhappily approached. He was coming to pay his new charger a visit. Mark walked up to him, and planted himself right before him, so that George could not pass without turning out. This he attempted to do; but Mark again crossed him, and bade him stop. The fierce fire of his eye, the agitated tremor of his tone, the abruptness of his action, were not to be mistaken. Stepping backwards, George inquired "what was the matter?"

"Matter!" cried Mark; "matter enough—*Godson* George! Pray, sir, do you plead guilty? Do you admit that you were a party to that pitiful fraud on that poor old woman? Give me my gun."

"Gun! what gun?" said George, still stepping back as Mark advanced.

"None of your evasions, sir," exclaimed Mark. "I know all. Villains should not have

the innocence of boyhood nigh them, to disclose their deeds. From a child have you supplanted me."

"It is false—I have not; nor in this—"

Ere he could finish his sentence the hand of his brother was on his collar. He shook him violently.

"False!—The lie, too, to complete all!" and with a furious thrust he hurled him to the ground.

Mark rushed into the house, and ran up to his own room. He passed one of his sisters, and, though she spoke to him, he made no reply. Hastily packing up a few clothes in a portmanteau, he went to his desk for the small sum of money he had there locked up, and for a few letters, resolving to leave his home at once, and for ever.

Whilst he was so occupied, there was a gentle knock at his door: it opened, and his favourite sister, Amelia, the one he had passed on the stairs, entered.

"Oh, Mark," she said; "what have you

done? George is bleeding shockingly at the mouth, and papa is in the most dreadful rage. May I say you are sorry, in order to make peace, dear Mark?"

"No, you may not," said Mark in a voice of thunder; but, softening it in a moment, he added, "but I am sorry for speaking so to you. I know you mean kindly, dear Amelia; and though I do not attend to your suggestion, you must think kindly of poor Mark, whom you will see no more for many a long day. You see I am packing up and going away."

"Do not act rashly, dear Mark. Sleep on it: the morning will bring calmer thoughts."

"It may—but it finds me not here."

And so saying, he turned over his letters, and shut his desk and portmanteau. "Do you take care of my few books and chattels," he said, "unless they are ordered out of the house; in which case, direct them to Edward Sileby for me. And now, adieu. I would say good bye to the rest, but am fearful of meeting my father in my present mood. Good bye:" and he

kissed his sister, descended the stairs, and walked out of the house.

He went to a labourer's cottage, and engaged the man to convey his portmanteau to the inn at N——; and thither he directed also his own solitary steps. At first, on his getting out of his father's house into the open air, he found relief at escaping any further scene, and congratulated himself at having got over his interview, however unpleasant it had been. A weight was off his mind, and he felt like a man who has been enduring the tooth-ache, or the pressure of a tight boot, and who feels himself at length relieved from the throbbing agonies of the one or the maddening torture of the other. But, as he walked along, the damp air of evening chilled his brow, and cooled his hot blood. He turned to survey the Rectory and the village. The smoke curled above the leafless trees; and all was still, save the bark of the house-dog. A farmer passed, and touched his hat; and Mark was again alone beyond the last white cottage. It had been an unhappy home to him, especially

in latter years, and he was leaving it in bitterness and in anger: but it was the home of his birth and his boyhood; and the ashes of his mother were in its churchyard. His heart died within him: he leaned on a gate and wept. Then, recovering himself, he proceeded rapidly to N——.

CHAPTER VI.

It was late when Mark reached the inn at N——. He wrote a few lines to his brother George, stating, that he had not left home for fear of the consequences of their quarrel, and that, if he wished to communicate with him on the subject, a letter directed to the care of Edward Sileby would find him, wherever he might be. He then commenced a letter to his father; but he was so warmed with the theme of his wrongs, that he was himself conscious that his expressions had outstripped his original intentions, which had been a leave-taking as little unfriendly as possible under the circumstances. He therefore threw his letter into the fire, and resolved not to attempt another.

By the time the man arrived with his port-

manteau, it was so late that Mark gave up all idea of going on to Rotherington that night. He therefore ordered a chaise early in the morning, despatched the letter to his brother, and retired to his bed-room. Long did he lie awake, agitated with thoughts of the most conflicting description. Sorrow and anger—natural sorrow, and not unreasonable, if unnatural, anger, filled his breast, when he thought that he was, in all probability, for ever estranged from his father; when he thought, too, of the cause—his baseness—his fraud upon his first-born; his favouritism for his second son; his deception on the poor old godmother. His brother was an object that he could not reflect upon without madness. All the wrongs of his boyhood and youth might be referred to him. For him he had been slighted and passed over—for him he was now an exile from his paternal hearth and heart. And he had not been the passive unintentional instrument of his wrongs, but the active, the ready, the malicious cause. He felt anxiety for his youngest brother, lest, as he had been his informer, on

him should be visited the punishment and atonement for his assault on his brother George; and the gentle figure of Amelia, the peace-maker, the last of his family from whom he had received a kind word or attention, came before him. Then his uncle, and the fair lady of the picture, and Rosa Sileby, and Edward, her brother and his friend, more indistinctly presented themselves, and were mingled in most admired disorder in the dream of that feverish slumber into which he sunk at last. As the strings, which the minstrel last swept, still vibrate after the others and when his song has ceased; so do those organs of the brain, which have been last exercised by our waking thoughts, give a tone to the visions of the night. A subtle sympathy of chords may, and does, recall other notes from afar, but still there is an association and a symphony, which might be traced to those latest strains, were not our powers of judgment under a spell at the time, and our reason's sentinels only partly at their post.

Mark, who knew his uncle's early hours, was

in the chaise almost before it was light in the morning. The Squire was already up when he arrived, and was much surprised to see him so soon. From the letter which the servant had brought him from Mark on the previous evening, he had been quite persuaded it would take several days for him and his father to come to any satisfactory arrangement.

"Come, my boy," said the Squire, "I am all curiosity. Let us first go to breakfast, and after that, '*postquam exempta fames dapibus*,' tell us all about it."

Mr. Masborough and his nephew soon despatched their meal, and then Mark, taking up his story from the time of his sending his note, recounted all that had passed. When he got to the attack upon his brother, the Squire could no longer contain himself:

"Served him right, by God! Why did not you take up the butt-end of your foot, and kick him till he got up again? Why, you and your brother are as fond of each other as I and mine! '*Tanta est discordia fratrum!*' Ay, Mark. I

shall write, myself, to Mrs. Sellwood, and expose their villainy. The old lady has something comfortable to leave, and though it will be no great object to you, Mark, it would be just as well to defeat their precious scheme. I 'm afraid, though, the ancient woman will scarce be made to understand; but I 'll try — I 'll ride over and see her. Mark, you shall go and see your godmother, you dog. '*Magna fuit quondam capitis reverentia cani, Inque suo pretio.*'—Now, I 'll bet twenty pounds, you cannot end the line."

"'*Ruga senilis erat,*' — done!" cried Mark quickly.

"Right, boy," said his uncle, taking out his pocket-book, and filling up a cheque as if carelessly. "There it is."

"You 've made a mistake, sir," said Mark, "this is a cheque on your banker at L—— for £100."

"Well, never mind; so much the better for you. Keep it, and no mistake; I 'll make you a present of the change."

Mark thanked his uncle, and could not help smiling at his manner of making a present.

After breakfast they took a walk to see how the workmen got on with a head, which Mr. Masborough was forming, for a lake. The two grand defects of Rotherington were a want of wood and a want of water.

"Those Chessalettes were perfect Midases; they turned all their woods to gold," said the Squire, "and I can't get them to grow up in a day; —but what I've planted will be good timber in somebody else's time; and a lake I have decided on having in my own. I have long thought that valley admirably calculated for the purpose, but then there was not water enough; so I am borrowing from the Fern-brook. I've paid my neighbour, Mr. Potts, pretty well; and besides, I am to turn back the course from below my lake into his land again. It is to come in at his third meadow."

The Squire was interrupted in his aquarian Georgics by his footman bringing a parcel. It was a letter and some papers from his attorney's

agents in London, saying that his presence was much wanted, as the suit was drawing to a crisis. "Well," said the Squire, "I've been expecting this some time, and we will start to-morrow. I was going to have told you all my plans about London *et cetera* after dinner,—but I'll tell you now;—so the lake may go to the devil. Let us turn back."

They returned home to prepare for their journey. The Squire told Mark that he had already written to his attorney to prepare a rent-charge upon his estate to the amount of £400 a year for him. "I should make it larger," said he, "but I want to tie you to me. I am growing old, and am alone in the world, except for you. I wish you to be independent, that we may be together on terms of equality. I don't want to play the Don over you—'*Ludere par impar*—.' These are to be your head-quarters, though you are to be at liberty to go elsewhere. Whilst I am in town and amongst the lawyers, I can best spare you for a long time;—the rather, as I have no anxiety as to the result of the suit, and I know

you wish to travel. I shall give you money enough to enable you to move well about:—money makes the mare to go—'*ut magus, et modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis.*' You shall have the term of half-a-year for constant motion, by which time I hope to escape the lawyers. Then come back, and you shall have as many leaves of absence as you please, but shorter ones. Are you content, —ay, or no?"

Mark expressed his acquiescence in the scheme, and his thanks to his uncle for his goodness. The Squire was much occupied with looking over documents relating to his law-suit, and making arrangements for going from home. Mark had little to do, and he spent the principal part of the morning in the drawing-room, pretending to be reading books of travels, but chiefly intent on the beautiful face in the picture of the Seasons. He wrote a letter to Edward Sileby, telling him of his uncle's plans, the suddenness of which alone prevented his coming to Sileby Hill, to pay his respects before leaving the country. He asked him to receive and forward all letters, and send

his goods, if they should be sent to him, on to Rotherington ; and he further commissioned him to inquire of Chessalette the sequel of the story of the picture : his direction would be at his uncle's London attornies', Messrs. Hook and Crook, Thavies' Inn ; for Mark had not asked his uncle where he intended taking up his quarters, and did not like to interrupt him whilst he was busy.

Mr. Masborough lost no time in sending on his own horses to within forty miles from London. The next day, he and Mark commenced their journey, during which they discussed Mark's tour and many other things. The Squire recommended him to take the widest range, as he reminded him he should never spare him again longer than for a trip to Paris or Brussels. The following day they arrived in town, and took up their quarters in Bond Street, at Stevens's.

Mr. Masborough set off to have an interview with his attornies, and came back with a letter

for Mark from his friend Edward Sileby. It was to the following effect:

"Dear Masborough—I am sorry to find we are not to see you again at present; but perhaps, on the whole, it is as well. You will know what I mean, when I tell you that the wedding is fixed for to-morrow week, after great opposition and attempts at delay on the lady's part; and I cannot but think *you* have something to do with this.

"Sebastian has retired from the *Laurel* Field, not before he saw his case was hopeless. He and I are now cordial again; and I have enlisted him in the cause of rescuing Marianne. He says he would rather have her himself, than see her go, money and all, to that scoundrel: and I believe him. Smith clings most closely to my lord, as his last and best anchor.

"Chessalette leaves us to-day. He will pass through town, and perhaps may see you. He is on his way to Florence, to join his family, who

are there. He is to supply his father's place in taking care of them, whilst he the baronet is in London, opposing your uncle. He gave me a long account of the picture; the sum of which is, that his mother, Lady Chessalette, got Sir Thomas Lawrence to paint it after a design planned by herself and Mrs. Lumley. They had been having a fancy ball at Rotherington. Lady Chessalette's three daughters and her son, Charles, then a boy of about fifteen, were the Seasons. His second sister, Matilda, was your Autumn; so there are Montague and Capulet for you! And the other two——but you don't care about them. He said, by the bye, that whichever way the chancery suit might end, he was sure the family pictures would be restored to them without dispute.

"Let me have a journal of your travels, and tell me where to write.

"Poor Rosa! she has just asked me if I was not writing to you? and when I said I was, she begged to send her love, for she was not another's yet. Her laugh showed that she little sym-

pathised with her own joke. Her spirits seem forced, and not what they used to be. No doubt this connexion is a great thing for the family, but I cannot help wishing that the link of brotherhood had bound M. M. to his true friend,

"EDWARD SILEBY."

Mark heard from a friend, whom he chanced to meet, that Chessalette had passed through Town the very day he and his uncle arrived, and was sorry he had not seen him. There was a little delay about the rent-charge, which Mr. Masborough was resolute in having settled before his nephew set off: had it not been for which, Mark was anxious to have caught Chessalette and accompanied him to Florence; as he little cared in what line he should travel, being well provided with means by a most liberal present from his uncle, and having always determined sooner or later to visit the beautiful city of the Arno. Perhaps he thought too of another beauty there, the disco-

vered original of his pictured love, Matilda Chessalette.

With the delay of the lawyers and the reluctance of his uncle, almost three weeks elapsed ere Mark set out. At length all was settled, and he bade his native land good-night.

CHAPTER VII.

MARK had discussed so many routes with his uncle during their journey to, and their stay in, London, and rejected and adopted them so often, that, although he appeared to have finally determined on going first to Copenhagen, and taking a peep at Denmark and Sweden,—then coming by Prussia, and the north of Germany, and so by Vienna, to Italy,—and home by France and Spain, —the Squire was not at all surprised to hear him say he should change his plan and go to the south first, reserving his northern tour till the season should be further advanced. To the south therefore, through France, he turned his course; and whilst he is on his way to Florence, it may not be amiss to take a peep at what has been going on at Sileby Hill.

The letter of Edward Sileby to Mark has already intimated the reluctance of Rosa to the marriage. She herself, till she had seen Mark, and for some little time after, as has been before observed, had been as desirous of the splendid alliance as any one of her family, even her mamma. She had been brought up to regard wealth and show as the great desiderata of life; and she looked forward to the time when she should mingle on equal terms with the gayest and the brightest circles of the metropolis.

But now she had learnt other feelings; and it required all the reiterated cautions of her mother to keep her to her views of ambition. The daughter was not unlike in position to a man who in the heat and impulse of the moment has been induced to send a challenge, of which, in the cooler period of reflection which succeeds, his natural cowardice induces him to repent; and the mother resembled the second, who has to employ every argument and to use constant excitation to save him from compromising his character, and to "screw his courage to the sticking

point." In addition to other arguments, Mrs. Sileby did not forget to repeat the infamous and unmaternal hint she had before suggested, that Mr. Masborough might, and probably would, be a frequent visiter at Lord Branville's; and that it would be far better to receive him so, when he would see her performing her magnificent orbit, than for them to be ever together, but in the very different scene of poverty and all its attending humiliating circumstances, which they would be only too likely to reproach each other with having entailed upon them. This argument had had far more weight than it ought to have had with Rosa as long as Mark was present; but, when he was quite gone, and the appointed day for her wedding with another was rapidly advancing, then she began really and truly to feel all the merit, all the good qualities, of him she was to lose, and all the value of the gem "which possession would not show her." At one time that recklessness, which characterises people on the point of taking desperate steps, impelled her to an unnatural gaiety; she sung, she danced, she laughed:

at another time, she would sit silent as if wrapt in abstraction, or wander out for hours together, melancholy and alone. Edward would perhaps have been almost willing to forego the high interest of connecting the wealthy young lord with their family, for the sake of having Mark for a brother; but he knew the anxiety of his father and mother on that score, and indeed he was well aware that they risked more than hopes upon the venture; for he had no doubt the increased splendour they had latterly exhibited, had encumbered the very small family estate in such a manner, that a son-in-law, who could not only be put off with a nominal portion not paid down, but who might be also further taxed to relieve his relations, would be highly desirable. Edward therefore stood neuter. Not so Sebastian; in him his mother found a most ready and active ally. He had every motive which his brother could have for wishing the alliance, without the counteracting one of regard for Mark Masborough. He therefore used to plan rides for himself and his sister and Lord Branville; and,

as he had now given up as hopeless all thoughts of rivalling his brother in Laura's affections, and turned his besieging plans in opposition to Mr. Smith against Marianne, he used, as often as posble, to enlist those young ladies and his brother to join their equestrian expeditions. Not a ruin for miles round was left unexplored, nor a hill neglected which promised an extensive view.

At first Mr. Smith swelled the troop, but as he was a miserable horseman, and as moreover he had to ride borrowed horses; and as, further than that, Sebastian took especial care to select for him the most vicious and uncomfortable Rosinantes, he soon declined the course. He was conscious that nothing could throw him back so much in his lady's good graces as being made to appear ridiculous before her eyes; and he resolved therefore to confine himself to preventing the riding excursions as much as possible, and to making as much way as he could in the evenings.

What finally drove him from the saddle was the success of a plot of Sebastian's, who one morning said, if he would join their party, he

would lend him a sweet little love of a mare, which was as quiet as a lamb,—so quiet, in short, that his sister used to ride her. Mr. Smith was all gratitude, till the horses were brought to the door. The ladies mounted. A steady-looking bay cob-horse stood near.

"This is mine, I suppose?" inquired Mr. Smith.

"Oh, no, that is my brother's; don't you know it?" said Sebastian; "that's yours."

"What! that snorting, pawing, prancing, restless creature? That is no lamb, I'm sure." So said Mr. Smith; but Sebastian assured him he never was so mistaken in his life: it was mere gentle playfulness; and he pointed out, as a proof of her quietness, that she had nothing on but a single snaffle bit, and finally appealed to his sister, whether she had not frequently ridden *La Belle Sauvage?*

Miss Sileby said she had often and often, and turned away her laughing face; for she was in this plot her brother's confederate, and did not add, (as she might have done,) that she had given

up *Belle Sauvage* from finding her too vicious; nor did Sebastian mention that all this was nearly a year ago, and that soon after that time she had lamed herself in a kicking match with a cart-mare, and had ever since been out at grass, till she was taken up to be got into saleable condition. Moreover, Sebastian had caused a trick well known to farriers, and adopted when they spirit up their quadrupeds for the fair, to be applied to *Belle Sauvage*.

"All play, my dear fellow," said he; "come, don't be afraid—mount, we are off."

And away the party went. *Belle Sauvage* could hardly be held by two grooms when she saw the others away before her; but Mr. Smith, feeling not so much mere bodily fear, as the fear of being thought afraid,—and half-believing that, as Miss Sileby used to ride the mare, she could not be vicious but merely playful,—and moreover, being aware that she would only grow more impatient the longer he delayed, sprung into the saddle. The grooms, who had received their instructions from Sebastian, pretended to

assist him in getting his off-foot into the stirrup, but took care to prevent his doing so; and away dashed *Belle Sauvage* with Mr. Smith taken at a sad disadvantage. Sebastian had deeply laid his scheme, and he led his party swiftly round the stables, instead of going down the park, that he might go through a gate before Mr. Smith was started. His plan succeeded. They trotted through the stable-yard, and then stopped to look round and see whether their companion was coming. Miss Lumley perceived there was some plot; and as Mr. Smith was her accepted suitor, though certainly rather at a discount, she could not help feeling annoyed. The rapid rattle of runaway hoofs, and a cry of "stop, stop," were heard; and in another moment, over the high rails of the stable-yard, close round the corner of the stable-wall, sprung *Belle Sauvage*. As she turned sharply, and leaped in her turning, it was a case to have tried the skill of the best of horsemen, even of Mark Masborough himself, had he been the rider. What wonder then that Mr. Tigranes Plantagenet White Smith, already only secured by

the mane, was jerked far away by the impetuous beast? *Belle Sauvage*, lightened of her load, galloped past the other horses; and all the party rapidly turned back, to assist the fallen rider. He was unhurt, having been pitched upon a straw-heap; his handsome morning coat, for which Willis was the sufferer, was the only damage sustained.

Mr. Smith was not a nervous man, nor deficient in personal courage. Finding himself unhurt, he sat upon the straw as the party approached, and showed no little tact in turning his defeat almost to advantage, so quietly did he appear to take his misfortune. Against Sebastian, who, he doubted not, had deceived him, he felt real rage, but he resolved to have a deep and lasting, though future, revenge, and therefore he wore towards him a present smile.

"Ah, young Squire," he exclaimed, shaking his head, "your lamb is a wolf in sheep's clothing. You were deceived in her, you see."

Miss Lumley hoped Mr. Smith was unhurt, and he assured her "he was entirely unhurt and

unalarmed, and quite overpaid for his mishap by her kind inquiry."

Edward perceived that Sebastian's triumph was far from perfect. "Shall I catch your horse, Mr. Smith?" he inquired.

"No, thank you; I shall ride no more to day," replied Mr. Smith.

"Well, but you don't mean to sit there all day?"

"No," said Mr. Smith; and he arose, walked back to the house, and cautiously avoided *Belle Sauvage* for the future.

The weather, against which Napoleon was not omnipotent, leagued with Smith against Sebastian. Their rides were prevented after that day; and the drawing-room was a place where the young huntsman did not appear to advantage. They frequented the billiard-room, and here Mr. Smith had his usual good luck, as he called it. He won a little from Edward, a great deal from Lord Branville, and more than he could pay from Sebastian.

The absence of Mark relieved Lord Branville

from the necessity of his so vigilant and assiduous attention to his bride elect. Besides, the time rapidly approached, when she was to be his, beyond all danger of rivalry. The day was fixed, and the hours kept running on.

The Misses Lumley were to be the bridemaids; and the three young ladies at length received their magnificent dresses for the occasion from London. All was bustle, and the busy note of preparation sounded from "morn till noon, from noon till dewy eve." The neighbouring families were invited. The tour was planned and settled. Mr. Lumley came and joined the party, and Edward took the opportunity of asking his consent to his marriage with Laura.

"Why, young gentleman," said Mr. Lumley, "do you see, I wish it had been your brother, who is a jolly good fellow, and the eldest son, and who will have Sileby Hill some day; and you, I rather think, will have to thump the cushion, or do some other younger son's work; but, as Laura will have something comfortable enough for two, when I die, which I hope won't be before I have

drank another hogshead of claret and another pipe of port, she shall have you, if she likes, though she ought to have a title, like Miss Rosa there; but I shall expect you to wait till you are in some profession, for I shall only give her a trifle down, mind ye: I can't starve and leave off my glass of wine, and confine myself to gin-and-water, even for the sake of being indebted to you, Mr. Edward, for the honour of being a grandfather. So, that's it. By the bye, would Marianne do as well for you? for Laura has really a right to expect an eldest son. Oh, I forgot Smith; ay, he has a deuced fine place in Ireland."

The evening before the wedding-day arrived, Rosa seemed to have lost all her ambition and anxiety for her grand alliance. Her mother cheered her, and again repeated her favourite argument about Mark. Miss Sileby at one time meditated asking her brother Edward in confidence, whether he thought his friend Mark returned her affection, for she was persuaded, if that were the case, Edward would be entrusted

with the secret. But shame and the chance of hearing a negative stopped her lips. At length the morning arrived, bright and cheering. The visitors were all assembled. They drove to the church; the ceremony was performed, the breakfast partaken of, and finally Lord and Lady Branville drove off to the tune of the merry bells, and the congratulations of the party.

Meanwhile the old Squire, who had remained at Stevens's for some time after his nephew's departure, finding from his attorney that his law-suit was likely to be brought to a termination one way or other in about three weeks, resolved to save himself the trouble of travelling, and to remain in town till that was over; and therefore he thought it would be as well, for the sake of quiet, to go into lodgings. He was a little struck by the legal gentleman's phrase of "one way or other," it being the first time he had ever received a hint that there were two sides of the question, or that there could be any other than one termination.

It could make no very great difference to him in a pecuniary point of view, whatever way the

cause might be decided, as, if he lost Rotherington, he would of course be entitled to have the purchase-money returned to him; but still he felt very considerable anxiety as to the result, both because he had taken a great liking to the spot, and also because he felt strongly the injurious and treacherous conduct of Sir Charles Chessalette, and was loth to see it crowned with victory.

Mr. Masborough took up the *Times*, and his eye fell upon a very attractive advertisement:

"Splendid Suite of Apartments.—In the Regent's Park, a first floor, consisting of two best sitting-rooms, bed-room, dressing-room, servants'-room. A single gentleman preferred. Terms five guineas a-week."

Mr. Masborough called accordingly at the reference annexed, and decided on taking Mrs. Brickman's apartments. He had brought with him a country servant of the name of Giles Stiles, who acted in London as coachman, footman, and valet, but in the country he went by the name of "master's own man." Giles had come to town with a great prepossession against the knavery and

frauds of the metropolis, and, in sooth, his very worst ideas and prejudices had been verified and confirmed. Amongst the gentlemen's servants with whom he had associated, he had heard littl talked of but different plans of robbing thei masters by the aid and contrivance of their tradesmen. Giles was not corrupted, but remained "among the faithless, faithful only he," and it was his great delight to detail the different schemes of roguery to his master. The Squire was of that good-tempered disposition that he liked to encourage his gossiping attendant, and he listened patiently, and indeed with interest, to some of his stories. "There 's Mr. Skinner, sir, as used to wear finer shirts than your own self, sir, with cambric frills—my eyes, this long!—he is Sir Alexander Gudgeon's wallet, and keeps all his accounts into the bargain—and, bless me, if he don't come it strong! He receives all his money for him, and he keeps it, and he pays his bills; and he charges fifteen per cent discount to himself on all of 'em; and, if any tradesman objects, he soon shifts his master's custom, and does

not pay the bill into the bargain; but if they do not object, then he don't overhaul their account like: and, moreover and besides, he regularly pays the great firm of Hauling, Fleece, and Bone twice over; and they divide every other bill with him."

"And does Sir Alexander never find this out?" inquired the Squire.

"Never, sir," replied Giles: "for, Lord bless ye, how should he? Mr. Skinner keeps no books—for he can't write, though he can read—so he trusts all to memory, which he says never fails him; nor does it, only his master. Then, you see, sir, he keeps the receipts for vouchers, except them as he loses on purpose; and, besides, Sir Alec never looks at 'em, but trusts him quite entirely, poor easy gentleman. Only about twice a-year, he has what he calls an audit, and then Mr. Skinner tells him about how much he has paid, and about how much he has by him, and about how much he owes: and that he calls passing his accounts. And then, sir, he deals with Mr. Corn, the bootmaker, who supplies all

servants of his *proper* customers for nothing, quite gracious like; and sets them down in the master's bills. By the bye, that makes me think Sir Alec once did say to Skinner, 'Skin,' said he—he calls him Skin for short—'Skin, you talk of paying Hauling, Fleece, and Bone for those linens for my shirts last summer; I think you have paid them already: you remember telling me so last time you told me the state of affairs?' 'No, sir,' replied Mr. Skinner, 'I said it was owing, and you 've forgot.' 'Well, Skin,' replies Sir Alec, 'no doubt you 're right; you 're always right, Skin.' And, sir, do you know Mr. Skinner is married (though his master does not know) to Mrs. Picket, Lady Gull's housekeeper, and whenever Sir Alec goes to his aunt's, Mrs. M'Cackle, the nabob's widow, who is very odd, and very rich, (so she has a right to be odd, no doubt,) and who won't allow of a man-servant near the house, he puts Mr. Skinner on board wages, sometimes for a month together, and then Mr. Skinner pockets all the money, for he goes and lives with his wife at Lady Gull's; and this has

gone on frequently for the last three or four years, and no soul in her ladyship's kitchen has ever squeaked—and then—"

"Well, well, Giles, this is enough for once; so now be still,—'*favete linguis*'—not that you know Horace," said the Squire.

"But, sir," replied the loquacious Giles, "do let me tell you of Mr. Gulf, Lord Decker's—"

"No, no more now, Giles," said Mr. Masborough.

"Well, sir, then next time I must tell you about him," replied Giles; "and about the way Mr. Spare's servants *do* him. He 's very close; looks to all bills himself; but they *do* him: for instance—the fishmonger's bill is made out at one price, and the steward really only pays little more than half, and the—"

"Stop, Giles," said the Squire,

> "'Garrulus hunc quando consumet cunque, loquaces
> Si sapiat——'

"Ah, you may scratch your head; I know you can't make it out. I must have a man about

me that knows Latin, and that can appreciate my allusions."

"I 'll larn, if you 'll consider it in my wages, sir," exclaimed the ready Giles. "There 's a linkist as teaches all the tongues of Babel to any capacity in a new way in a fortnight. I 've seen his advertisement."

Mr. Masborough, seeing he could not quite stop Giles's eloquence, contented himself by diverting it into a new channel. He therefore asked about the horses; and Giles told him he had removed them and the carriage to stables nearer their new lodgings, both for convenience sake, and also because he found he was paying too dearly at their former quarters. He ventured to recommend his master to make a point of keeping the fact of his having an equipage with him a secret from Mrs. Brickman; for, he was sure, if she knew of it, she would not be content to charge him merely double for every thing she got for him. Mr. Masborough humoured Giles by consenting.

The whole period of the Squire's residence

at Mrs. Brickman's was a continual warfare between that most consummate of lodging-house keepers, which is to say, most dishonest of pilferers and embezzlers, and Giles. Giles was of too pure eyes to behold such iniquity. He used privately to weigh the cheese left after his own luncheon, and daily missed a quarter of a pound at least; the same with the meat: the lady took the rectorial tithes before it was dressed, and the vicarial after. If Giles remarked how small the joint looked — it had shrunk before the fire. Did he say the leg of mutton had gone quickly, he was reminded that his master and he had both had the benefit of change of air, a wonderful whetstone to the edge of the teeth. A tureen of mock-turtle soup went down from Mr. Masborough's dinner untouched; Giles resolved it should fare differently in half an hour. Alas! the cat had had the first turn, and the mischievous home-loving animal had eaten the whole of it! Greedy creature! she came purring to Giles's knee, looking very little like the recent swallower of

a tureen of soup, but rather the very Cassius of the nine-lived tribe, "with a lean and hungry look!" Hunger is a savage: the tender part of an Englishman is his stomach: the soup had cost Mrs. Brickman more than real turtle: Giles had set his heart upon it: he would have sold his birth-right for it (if he had had any), and now to be robbed of it, and the theft covered by so meagre a lie! Giles was a Solomon in his way, and he might have the celebrated judgment of the son of David in his eye; for, he seized poor puss, and addressing Mrs. Brickman, said: "you well know as how the things, what made that soup, cost, or were made out to cost, in the week's bill, more nor ten shillings: there was the calf's head, the eggs, the herbs, and all that; now, unless you ransom your accursed thief of a cat—poor pussy; be quiet, puss—blow me and curse me, as I'm a Christian, if I won't, as master says, 'suspend her *haberus corpus*.' There!" and he held the accused up with his hand round her neck, as if performing strangulation. Puss struggled from fright, not pain;

for Giles knew her innocence, and he squeezed her gently. Mrs. Brickman shrieked and flew to the rescue, screaming for the aid of Betty.

Those screams, the piteous mewings of puss, the loud voice of Giles, crying, "ten shillings saves her," and the fierce war-cry of Betty, as she joined her arms to her mistress's, raised so dreadful a tumult, that Mr. Masborough seriously thought violence, or even murder, must be going on. He ran down from the drawing-room, and when he reached the stairs, which descended from the ground-floor to the kitchen, he there beheld the situation of the belligerents. His approach, like that of one of the cloud-descending gods on the plains of Scamander, stayed the fight. "My cat!"—"My soup!"—"My missus!" cried the three voices at once, in harmonious discord.

"Come here, sir," cried Mr. Masborough to his servant, and retreated.

From Giles he received an account of the extraordinary scene he had witnessed. He bade him be comforted, for Mrs. Brickman would in-

fallibly pay for the soup in the next world, and he scolded Giles for attacking the cat. Giles explained; and Mr. Masborough was satisfied when he found that his servant only '*molliter manus imposuit*,' as he expressed it; and peace was restored. Giles afterwards made out that the soup was sold by the quart to a neighbouring confectioner. This secret, with some others, was confided to him by Betty, whom he had withdrawn secretly from the alliance of her mistress by tender overtures, and a promise of marriage, which however he never had the slightest intention of keeping, but made merely as a stratagem, to learn the devices of the enemy.

The interviews of Mr. Masborough with his attornies, Messrs. Hook and Crook, seemed so unsatisfactory, their tone of confidence was so much altered, and their advice to compromise his suit with Sir Charles Chessalette was so constantly repeated, that Mr. Masborough began at length to feel some misgivings as to the result. It was true, no new circumstances had occurred in the case, and he had been repeatedly assured

of the utter impossibility of its being decided against him ; but if it was so impossible, why should he be recommended to compromise, especially when all, or nearly all, the expense had been incurred, and the time was so near at hand for his adversary's defeat? Nevertheless, the idea of losing Rotherington began to disturb him; and, as his hostility to his brother still continued, he would not return to his neighbourhood, even supposing the gentleman who had taken his house on a lease should be willing to give it up. He therefore thought it might not be amiss to invest some of his money in the purchase of another estate; and with that view he once more turned his eye to the advertisement department of the TIMES. It was not long before he was attracted by the following announcement:

"MOST ELEGANT, PICTURESQUE, AND DESIRABLE ESTATE, to be sold by Mr. GEORGE SWALLOW. The purchase by private contract having gone off, Mr. G. S. is enabled to state, that he will have the honour of selling by

auction to-morrow (as originally advertised), the truly splendid property of the late *James Racket, Esq., M. P.*, at LOSEBY. Previous notices have so fully explained that this little *Eden* contains all that the heart of man could desire, or the poet's imagination devise in its wildest oriental dream, that G. S. here confines himself to the following brief *and matter-of-fact statement.*

" The estate consists of three hundred and fifty acres of arable, meadow, and pasture land, interspersed with thriving woods, and useful and ornamental dwellings for tenants and labourers. A lovely river intersects the verdant grounds; a lake—but here we must borrow the impassioned lyre of the bard:

> ' Before the mansion lay a lucid lake,
> Broad as transparent, deep, and freshly fed
> By a river, which its soften'd way did take
> In currents through the calmer water spread,' &c.

" Of the mansion we will say this only, that, if it want some of the fancied comforts of modern luxury, it possesses one most decided advantage, namely, that scope is given, ' ample

scope and verge enough,' for the taste of the fortunate future occupant. Here, *uncontrolled by the whims* and incongruities *of former possessors*, he will find a spot *waiting for the hand of art*, and he may here indulge *his own* designs or those of any architect he may best rely on. A view of the majestic and untiring sea is to be had from the more elevated points of the estate; and a pack of hounds, kept within three miles of the house, gives assurance of the manly and invigorating sport of the country gentleman. The right of fishing and shooting over the whole manor of Loseby is annexed. And to crown the whole, the house is within a very convenient distance of the thriving *emporium* of the southwest of England, BRISTOL."

"' *Ille terrarum mihi præter omnes angulus*,' " soliloquised Mr. Masborough, laying down the paper—" the very spot for me:—a good way from Rotherington, and also from my *dear* brother! I 've a fancy to migrate southerly; and I 'll tell Mr. Hook to make inquiries as to the

value. But, hang it, the sale is to-morrow. Well, I won't bid, then; but I'll just look in at Swallow's, and see what it sells for. It will be a guide to other purchases. I wish Mark was not gone—heigho!"

The next day, the squire drove to his attorneys', and he there learned that Mr. Froth, Sir Charles's counsel, had succeeded in gaining time for some fresh affidavits. "I fear, sir," added Mr. Crook, "the delay will not stop here. The Vice-Chancellor, sir, seemed to take a great interest in favour of the young heir. I would seriously call your attention, sir, to the expediency of coming to terms with Sir Charles, sir. It will be as cheap in the end, and then you are quite safe, sir."

"So you told me, *sir*, I was before," replied the Squire, in no very amiable tone.

"I beg you a thousand pardons, sir," said Mr. Crook, "for correcting you; but, in truth, I and my partner have never thought so, sir; and we always wondered how a man, sir, of Mr. Cheat-

ham's great experience and profound legal attainments could have entertained a contrary opinion."

Mr. Masborough angrily intimated that he never would compromise; and left the law-factory of Messrs. Hook and Crook in no good humour. He had forgotten to speak about the Racket property; and, in fact, it was not till Giles Stiles, who had the night before received orders to that effect, pulled up at the Auction Rooms, that Mr. Masborough recollected any thing of the estate near the "emporium," with its woods, waters, and the hounds in the neighbourhood.

As Mr. Masborough entered the room, he heard a loud and angry dispute, from which he collected that two bidders were contending to which of them the last lot had been knocked down. The words were so violent between the rival claimants, that blows seemed the probable result, when the auctioneer terminated the battle by deciding that the lot must be put up again.

"Gentlemen," he exclaimed, flourishing that

hammer, to which in comparison the sceptre of Jove, and the trident of Neptune, and the caduceus of Mercury were feeble instruments, "Gentlemen, agreeable to the rules and conditions of sale (see rule VI.) I put up again the splendid estate of Loseby, the residence of the late James Racket, Esq., M.P. Those who know the profusely liberal manner in which that gentleman lived in town, may well imagine the sort of residence in which he would choose to live in the country. It is near to Bristol, the emporium of commerce, the modern Tyre and Sidon, where the ships of all nations and of all sizes come and sit down together. But why should I repeat what I have already said? why should I 'gild the rose,' or 'throw a perfume o'er the violet?' You yourselves have witnessed the competition of these two Bristol gentlemen; they must know the worth of the prize; they prove their sense of shame at having let it appear to be knocked down at the paltry sum of sixteen thousand pounds—not fifty pounds an acre, gentlemen. They contend for it still. At that sum it now stands."

"Come, Mr. Swallow, I'll say a bold seventeen thousand. Knock it down to me."

Mr. Masborough perceived that the Bristol gentlemen were determined to have the lot, as it was one of the late disputants who made the above bid. The other nodded to the auctioneer, and the two went on opposing each other till they had raised it to seventeen thousand eight hundred. The last bid had come from the bold gentleman who had spoken before. He was covered with gold chains, rings, and seals. The other seemed quite defeated. He was a shabby-looking little fellow, and the dandy eyed him with great contempt. The little man turned round to Mr. Masborough, and whispered—"If you want to speculate, sir, now 's your time."

"You know the lot?" inquired Mr. Masborough.

"Well, sir," replied the little fellow; "it is dirt cheap. I have laid out so much money lately, my hands are rather tied; but if you'll buy, I'll go you halves." A knowing wink accompanied the last intimation.

"Is the house really a good one?" said Mr. Masborough.

"Going, going," said the auctioneer—

"Very good," said the little man; "has been, might be made again—very. Bid, sir, bid, quick, or you 'll lose it."

"For the last time going—"

"Eighteen thousand," cried the Squire.

"I shall bid no more," cried the dandy bidder, answering the appealing eye of the auctioneer, and pointing to the Squire's prompter. "I saw that misshaped hump of ugliness persuade the gentleman there to bid. He could not buy himself, so he won't let me. But he 'll hear of this another time. I 'll be cursed if he has a bargain this many a long day." And so saying, he flung out of the room.

As soon as the little man saw he was fairly gone he gave vent to his reply. "Fine feathers make fine birds! *I've* never been in the gazette. The name of Hoggins has never appeared where the name of Higginbottom *has!*"

The rest of the little man's philippic the Squire

did not hear, as he advanced to the auctioneer, to give his address and the other requisites for completing his purchase of an estate, which he had never seen, but which he trusted would be found such as he should be well pleased with, since he had had the commendation of Mr. Hoggins, and been a witness to the disappointment which his rivalry had occasioned to Mr. Higginbottom.

CHAPTER VIII.

Mark arrived at Florence without any particular adventure, except his having fallen in with an old Cambridge friend of the name of Derwent. Derwent was also on his way to Florence, and so they agreed to travel together.

Mark was much astonished with the change which had taken place in Derwent's appearance, manners, and sentiments, since he had known him at the University a few years before. Now he appeared quiet, thoughtful, and retiring; at that time he had been the gayest of the gay, idle, and apparently thoughtless; yet he had obtained a character for singular talents, both with his tutors and his associates. The former considered that he must learn every thing by a species of intuition, as they could never hear of his reading,

and yet found him always prepared with his lectures; and the latter never saw him flinch from his glass or from any scheme of mischief; but, on the contrary, always prepared to enter into fresh frolics and fresh excesses. The truth was, that Derwent had a method in his madness. The exuberance of his animal spirits prevented his retiring from that society where he ever found himself so welcome an addition, and the applause that his jokes and his songs, which were always allowed to have more point and wit than those of any other, never failed to obtain, held him fast by those "adamantine bonds" of vanity, which have such a spell over children of riper years. But, when the last echo of mirth had died away, and the last merry companion had staggered from his room, he would retreat from the scene of debauch to the quiet recess of his study, bind a wet towel round his burning temples, and with that head-dress sit down to

"Unsphere the spirit of Plato,"

or pursue the subtle distinctions of the Stagyrite.

Nor did he confine his studies to the routine of tutorial guidance, or expect them to lead him to the prize of academical distinction. Such a prize, if worth any thing, he considered merely as the means of introduction, and a testimonial of recommendation. His real aim was to qualify himself for his appearance on the grand stage of life, the theatre of the world.

The only distraction which his plan had undergone, had been when, in pursuit of his study of character, he had dipped deeply into the dramatic authors of the Elizabethan era. Fascinated by their attractive pages, and led on to familiarize himself with all their cotemporaries, he had very nearly run into the sweet error, the dear delusion, of the Muse. But he saw his danger: he steered his vessel from the latent rock in time, and he ever after skirted that syren's shore with caution and distrust.

Fearing lest any accident, any overlooking of minute accuracy, might prevent his attaining the *highest* honours, he withdrew from the attempt, left the University, spent a short time in London,

visiting every thing, and mixing in all companies, and finally set out to pass several months in each of the principal countries of Europe.

He was older than Mark, and had already been abroad some years, when they chanced to meet. Their acquaintance, however, was cheerfully renewed on both sides. Mark had always been accustomed to look upon Derwent as a superior being, a youthful Mentor, whose opinions he eventually failed not to adopt, where they originally differed from his own; and Derwent, on the other hand, had regarded Mark as a young man endowed by nature with a love and appreciation of truth, and by education with a plentiful supply of antiquated notions and prejudices; and when he found him so docile as to yield to his master mind, he adopted him for his chosen disciple.

"I admit," Derwent used to say to his willing hearer, "you can say by heart more odes of Horace than most men, can spin very musical verses, are a capital critic of the quantity of a proper name, and have a most surprising accuracy in

chronology, and ancient geography,—but what is the use of all this? You must get worldly knowledge; study your old authors' maxims, not their words; familiarise yourself with the examples, not the dialect only, of antiquity; and, still more than either, with the examples of modern times, and above all, those of *to-day*. But, as the alpha and omega of all things, eschew *poetry*, —it is a *habit*, a bad one, acquirable, and to be got rid of, as I well know. Do poets, or men of the world, ride in coaches, and ennoble families?" Here Mark, who had himself sacrificed at the Parnassian altar, at first would make a slight show of resistance; he would quote those who have found "poetry its own exceeding great reward," and he would point out glorious names descending to the remotest posterity. Then would Derwent scarcely retain the patience becoming such a philosopher. "Now," he would cry, "out of thine own mouth will I judge thee. By the very lines of a poet will I condemn thee!

'Can honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or flattery soothe the dull cold ear of Death?'

Gray is right. *Posthumous* fame is the merest shadow of a shade. *If* fame has any worth at all, it is *present* fame. Had you confined yourself to that, I would not have disputed your position; for it would be idle to deny that he, whose spirit is refreshed and cheered by the breath of the popular breeze, is not the better for obtaining what is agreeable to him! He has an enjoyment. Is a man the better for going to the opera? Yes, if he is fond of music. Or to a ball? Truly, if he likes to gaze on beauty adorned, and is fond of dancing. Besides the active and vivid pleasure of the moment, he has got moreover a subject for after-recollection, to which his thoughts may again and again recur. So it is with your 'great heir of fame;' he snuffs up the incense of praise offered to him with delight, and can constantly reflect with self-satisfaction on the influence he has acquired and the attentions he has received. But though they have all this gratification in their lifetime (which by the bye is not always the case), what are they the better for it after they are gathered to their fathers? What does

Milton's fame avail him now?—Shakspeare's? Homer's? What does the late applause of *posterity* avail those poor devils who have appealed to that righteous judge from the contempt or indifference of their cotemporaries? Are they conscious of what the world they have left so long thinks of them now, or unconscious? It matters not. Suppose them, if you can, conscious; and you will find it difficult to imagine them so, without at the same time feeling assured that they must have learned to form but a humble estimate of the importance of a life, which their new existence shows to be only temporary and a step to another. Suppose them unconscious; and then indeed will be evident how more than vain was the desire to extend their names beyond their own limit, and encroach upon futurity; for their only enjoyment was their anticipation, and that is passed even without their learning its falsehood, since they can no longer learn any thing. A great man thinks he will be talked of a thousand years hence. He may or may not, seeing that posterity is not to be depended upon

after all; and, at all events, it would be wise for him to enjoy what he can ensure. The love of praise is so useful as a stimulus to exertion with those whom a sense of duty might not sufficiently excite, that there is no doubt it ought to be encouraged, to keep the world progressing; but it is just as well to have it directed to a real object, and a man may have no lack of motive in looking for the good opinion of the friends he lives amongst, without waiting for that of people with whom he will never have communion."

So would Derwent harangue; so would Masborough listen, in their College days. But though Mark did but seldom strenuously dispute the doctrines of his friend, and though when he did he was invariably worsted in argument, yet in secret he indulged his favourite propensities; he spun verses, as Derwent sneeringly termed his poetical occupations, and, when the latter left the University, Mark relapsed into many heresies, and returned to sundry ideas, which he had been persuaded to renounce.

Mark could not but observe that his friend

had now lost much of his dogmatic manner, and had even changed a few of his opinions. He seemed, too, to be more tolerant; in short, less a theoretical, and more a practical philosopher. Besides, though it was true that the same number of years that had gone over the one, since they were last together, had no less gone over the other, yet the difference between them in point of seniority seemed to be lessened; and so, in fact, it was, *relatively* speaking; for, it cannot be denied that two or three years make a greater difference in boys or very young men than they do in people of more advanced age. Nor was this all; their worldly distinction was removed: Mark, instead of the irksome life of the younger son of a clergyman, had the inheritance of thousands before him; and Derwent, as he knew, though still independent in fortune, had had his income reduced by the substantiation of an adverse will. This was so subtle a cause for their feeling on terms of more exact equality than formerly, that, while it operated on both, it was not perceived, much less analysed by either.

Discussing old friends and old times, they found the hours of their travelling fly rapidly, and they seemed to reach their journey's end with much greater speed than they had advanced before they met. Mark compared them to two drops of rain running down a pane of glass, which go with double rapidity when they have joined themselves into one. This comparison produced the first sneer on the curled lip of his friend that he had seen since their last dispute at Cambridge. Mark had almost made up his mind to tell Derwent part of his object in coming to Florence—that sneer deterred him. He said, however, that "there was an English family, which he wished to inquire about."

They established themselves at an hotel, and lost no time in exploring the beauties of the place. Mark quickly made out where the Chessalettes were lodging, and he called there in the evening of the next day. The servant told him that Mr. Chessalette was gone out for a day or two on an excursion into the neighbouring country, but the ladies were at home. Mark said

that he had not the honour of their acquaintance, but would call again. As he and Derwent were leaving the house, they heard female voices and music, and Mark caught the words—"now, do be still, whilst Matilda sings to this air."

The name "Matilda" stopped Mark as though he had been touched by the wand of an enchanter, and turned to stone.

"Come," said Derwent, "you are not going to play the listener?"

"One moment, dear Derwent," cried Mark, as he heard the strings, as he conjectured, of a piano and a guitar.

The servant had shut the door and gone into the house, and the open window whence the sound proceeded overhung a garden, which was divided from the street by a wall. The two friends were out of sight, and the street was unfrequented.

"Why, you are as mad and poetical as ever!" exclaimed Derwent.

"No; only as musical.—Hush!"

The instruments stopped, and a voice which

Mark thought more melodious than aught ever dreamed of by poet or enthusiast, said gaily, "Well, now, I 'll sing the ballad Charles brought us from England. Mary and I have agreed it will suit admirably to our new air, better than to the one you set it to, Jane. We have been rehearsing this morning."

What was Mark's amazement to hear his own words from the mouth of his Matilda!

It was a little ballad which he had written on a story (said to be founded on fact, and which he had accidently met with in an old book at Rotherington) of a Troubadour falling in love with a lady by description, and undertaking a long journey, even to another quarter of the globe, to see her. The circumstances struck him as being somewhat coincident with his own, and, after he had read them in the drawing-room, he versified them in his bed-room. He had given the lines to Edward Sileby, with strict injunctions to show them to nobody, and especially not to Charles Chessalette. He might well then be astonished

at hearing them at Florence, or at all! The ballad was as follows:

THE TROUBADOUR AND THE COUNTESS OF TRIPOLI.

1.

" Every voice proclaims thy praise,
Countess fair of Tripoli;
I upon thy charms must gaze,
I will cross the severing sea.

2.

" In my grave I could not sleep,
Should I die with thee unseen;
Thee all style, who 've cross'd the deep,
Beauty's, Virtue's, peerless queen.

3.

" Many pilgrims Fame hath led
Far away to Palestine:
Love shall be my guide instead—
Holy Land to me is *thine*.

4.

" Grant me, God, one single gaze;
Then my death may instant be!
Every pilgrim speaks thy praise,
Countess fair of Tripoli!"

5.

So Rudél, the Troubadour,
Gallant, young, and handsome, spoke,
Quitting the Provençal shore,
Fix'd on charms unseen to look.

6.

Fiercely blew the Southern breeze,
Ill Rudél could brook delay;
Toss'd upon the raging seas,
Sick and worn the minstrel lay.

7.

When the vessel reach'd the shore,
Landing swift, a faithful friend
Tidings to the lady bore
How Rudél lay nigh his end.

8.

Quick compassion touch'd her breast;
To the ship the lady came,
And his dying hand she press'd,
And she call'd 'Rudél' by name.

9.

Life rekindled at the sight;
"Granted is my prayer," he cried;
"I have seen thy beauty bright;
Thanks, and"—in her arms he died!

10.

Near the shore a tomb is placed,
(So returning pilgrims tell,)
With Arabian sculpture traced,
Save one well known name, ' Rudél.'

11.

On the cliff a convent lone
Looks towards France across the sea—
There thou watchest still in stone,
Countess fair of Tripoli!

As the last echo died tremblingly away on the evening air, the other voices were heard complimenting the singer. The two young men had stood silent and motionless, with folded arms, like two statues, Derwent no less than Masborough. He had yielded to the single spell of the voice and the melody, but Mark had a thousand conflicting emotions.

" Beautiful—most beautiful!" at length Derwent exclaimed. Mark only sighed.

" Come, Masborough," said his friend, taking his arm, and moving him away. " You must introduce me to this seraph. Is she as beautiful in form as in sound?"

"Yes; oh, yes!" exclaimed Mark.

"Oh, then you have seen her, though you don't know her well enough to call?" said his friend.

"Why, no—I—meant to say, yes; what did you say?" said Mark, perceiving at once that he would have to go into explanation, unless he evaded the question.—"I never spoke to her," he added.

"Well, when her brother returns," replied Derwent, "you will not fail to call, and mind you take me and introduce me."

Mark said he would.

The next day the friends visited the celebrated Florentine Gallery, and looked on the wonder of the world, the goddess who "fills the air around with beauty." They hoped to see the young ladies, whom they had heard the evening before enter, but they were disappointed.

The day following there was to be a grand fête at the palace of an English nobleman, where all the principal natives were to be present; and, in addition to the special invitation, sent

round to all the English visitors, a general invitation was made public, in case any one should happen to have been omitted. Thither, therefore, the friends repaired, mutually noticing the accuracy of each other's toilet, and Mark observing, that "he thought Derwent must have quite forgotten that he had renounced all the pomps and vanities, and assumed the philosopher." They walked about the gay gardens, now joining in the dance, now listening to the *improvisatore*, now to the musician. At length they heard the same air as the one they had listened to when it came from the window. They hastened to the spot, and were grievously disappointed at seeing two Italian ladies playing, and one singing, not the ballad, but Italian words.

Great was their wonder at not meeting any of the Chessalettes. They agreed that it was quite impossible to believe that Charles would not have been certain to return for the fête, which they found had been talked of for the last week; and Mark was persuaded that he should know

Matilda if he saw her. They saw two English gentlemen talking together, and Derwent contrived to join their conversation. Having led it to the subject of the English in Florence, he inquired whether they knew the Chessalettes, and one of the gentlemen said he knew them well, and was surprised he had not seen them in the gardens; but perhaps they might be in the palazzo. He added, he knew they would be there, as Miss Matilda had told him so not three days ago; and he inquired whether Mark or Derwent had heard any particulars of Mr. Chessalette's quarrel with the French Count? They had not even heard of it. "Oh," replied the gentleman, "you must know the Frenchman admired Miss Matilda, who could not bear him, and he wrote her a letter, which Chessalette sent back with a message desiring him to send no more, and this led to a correspondence, and it was still going on when they happened to meet, quarrelled, and challenged each other; but the thing was settled by some influential French gentlemen here making

their man send a written apology to our countryman."

The day passed over, and Mark and Derwent were greatly disappointed. The Chessalettes did not appear.

The next morning they set off to make their call, and were not a little astonished at being told by the old woman, who let them in, "that they were all gone. They had left Florence early the day before. Something was the matter, she was sure. Mr. Chessalette came home in the night, and called his sisters up. They packed their things, and paid her for the house, which they had taken for two months longer. She could not tell which way they had gone."

Derwent and Mark were amazed. They went to the different hotels, and made all the inquiries they could. After some time they learnt that Charles had been followed on his excursion by the French Count, who had insulted him: they had fought, and Charles had left his adversary dangerously wounded. His friends had advised him

to conceal himself, or fly, till it could be known whether the count's wound was mortal. Charles, it was supposed, had taken his sisters away with him, not liking to leave them without a protector, especially after the notoriety the duel would occasion.

CHAPTER IX.

FLORENCE had lost all charms for Mark. He looked upon every thing he saw with an altered eye. The object he had come so far to behold was torn away from his gaze just at the time when his curiosity had been raised to the highest pitch, and at the moment when he had fully believed it was upon the point of being gratified. Derwent, too, he thought, though he would gladly have made light of it, appeared to share his disappointment more than agreed with so philosophical a character.

"It is a much harder case with me than you," he observed to Mark. "You have seen the lady, and I have only heard her. You can tell what she is like, and it seems I must be content with hearsay, unless we set out in pursuit. Come, now,

you must give me a description of this siren. You know, for anything I can tell, she may be half a woman and half a fish, like the real sirens of old, or she may have only one eye, or—"

"She has two most beautiful ones!" interrupted Mark, very little relishing so treasonable an hypothesis.

"And her figure?" inquired Derwent, "is that perfect? I want a regular description. Give it me as we walk to the Frenchman's lodgings and inquire the state of his wound. Perhaps, if he is recovering, the Chessalettes will return."

"I should think not," said Mark; "they would be objects of too much curiosity, especially Matilda."

"Is she shy, then?" inquired Derwent. "By the bye, where was it that you saw her?"

Mark affected not to hear the latter question, and to the former he returned only a general and vague answer about the universality of shyness amongst young unmarried ladies.

This position Derwent would at another time probably have combated, but now he was not to

be led away from his point. He returned to the charge.

"Come, Masborough, I am determined to have a full, true, and particular account of this young lady from head to foot, from the colour of her hair to the contour of her ancle. It will be a fine subject for a poetical youth like you—therefore, begin."

"Well, then," said Mark, rather peevishly, finding he could not distract Derwent from the subject, "her hair is auburn, eyes dark gray, figure good, ancles I did not notice."

"Ha, ha, ha," said Derwent, "an admirable precedent for a horse advertisement! A chestnut filly, long mane and tail, good shoulder, feet,—O most lame and impotent conclusion!—feet not worth notice: so it would run. Why, man, you should always look at a girl's ancles the very first thing. I always survey a woman upwards."

Mark bit his lip. It was tender ground that Derwent was treading upon. Fortunately, they at that moment reached the Count de Sadis's hotel. There were several other inquirers, and

especially Frenchmen, who swore, if the Count died, they would make it a national affair.

"What!" said one of them, looking in a very marked manner at Masborough and Derwent, which proved he knew them to be English—"What! is a gentleman to be murdered, because he makes honourable proposals to a little she-God-damme? He did her too much honour. I should have thought she might have been his on easier terms. Ma foi—sacre Dieu!"

The last exclamation was an interjection of pain. Mark had lost all controul over his temper, and applied a taper little black gold-headed cane, which he happened to have in his hand, violently to the shoulders of Monsieur. The cane shivered into splinters. The Frenchman danced and twisted about the room.

Another Frenchman, pale with rage, swore he would have the English God-damme's life.

Mark turned towards him: "I will meet you where you please—now, if you like."

"Agreed,"—said the Frenchman.

Derwent interposed: he said, "he hoped all

would be settled amicably. The French gentleman should apologise for speaking before his friend in the terms he had done of a lady of his acquaintance, and then his friend should apologise for the violence he had used."

"Tam his apology," said the one who had been beaten: "will his apology cure even my shoulder? and my honour is wounded no less. Blood only can wipe out the stain."

"Which of the two shall I attend first?" said Mark.

"Me," said the one.

"Me, me," said the other.

"Gentlemen," said Derwent, "one of you must have the politeness to take up with me. You seem disposed to turn a private affair into a national one; and therefore I have a right to go shares with my friend."

"Very well — swords, then. We will attend you in half an hour;—we will send our friends," said the quieter of the two Frenchmen.

Derwent told them which was their hotel, and then having been informed that the Count de

Sadis's wound was going on very favourably, he and Mark set out to look for some English gentlemen, to act as their seconds.

As they were walking towards their hotel, an Italian boy came up to Mark and gave him a letter. It was from Chessalette, desiring Mark, who he found was in Florence, to send him word how the French Count went on, and stating his regret at being out when Mark called, and his sorrow that he should not see him. He and his sisters were concealed at a small village about six miles from Florence, and they were going thence to Paris, by easy stages. He hoped Mark would come back with the bearer, taking care that nobody watched him, lest he should be traced. Mark told the boy to wait, and he would accompany him back in an hour's time. He and Derwent succeeded in finding the same two gentlemen whom they had met at the nobleman's fête, and who readily consented to lend their assistance.

On their return to their hotel, they found an old French gentleman, who said, "he was come

to have the honour to conduct the English Milords to the spot where the two Frenchmen with whom they had had a little unpleasantness, were waiting, close to the city. He was to have the pleasure to be second to one of them." The four Englishmen accompanied the civil old gentleman, who handed them his snuff-box, and chatted to them on the fineness of the weather, and the gaiety of the English nobleman's fête, and promised to tell a droll adventure that occurred there, after the little affair was over, to all the survivors of the party.

Mark felt rather nervous on the occasion. He was no swordsman. Derwent was an admirable fencer. He had studied the art on principle, in order to put himself on an equality with the fire-eating-race; he therefore had no fear. Mark in a whisper desired him, "if he fell, to write to his uncle, explaining the circumstances, and conveying his last thanks for all his kindness, and to send his trifling worldly wealth, and his watch, and trinkets, to his sister Amelia." Der-

went smiled, and bade him "take care only to be cool, and he hoped his injunctions would be superfluous."

They found their antagonists waiting for them in a small open space, in the centre of a large orchard. It was agreed that Mark and the one, whom he had struck, should first engage, and then Derwent and the other. Mark suggested to Derwent that as they were the challenged party, they had a right to have chosen the weapons, and that, as fencing was a common accomplishment with the French, they would engage on very unequal terms.

"I wish," said Derwent, "my dear fellow, you had thought of that sooner. It never occurred to me that you were not so experienced a swordsman as I am, and I should in fact have taken this weapon for choice. It would not be too late to claim your right now; I'll speak to your second about it."

"No," said Mark; "not now."

Mark's second inquired if any thing was

amiss, and being told all was ready, he went over to the Frenchmen to measure the swords.

This preliminary being settled, the two principals took their places. The second pass the Frenchman made, his sword would have run through Mark's breast, had it not run through his hand and arm. It entered a little below the wrist, between the thumb and finger, passed out, and entered the arm, running along the bone. Mark's sword fell from his hand, and he turned very sick.

The Frenchman said he was quite satisfied; the hand that had inflicted the blow had been punished.

Derwent asked Mark how he felt. The latter, unable to answer, fainted.

"Take care of him, sir," said Derwent to Mark's second; and then, addressing his own, he asked him "to inquire whether the other gentleman wished to proceed in the affair, as the one, on whose account he had embarked in it, had expressed himself satisfied."

Mark, recovering, opened his eyes, and saw Derwent standing by him. Derwent's second returned from the Frenchman, and said, "the affair must proceed with him, unless both the English gentlemen would apologise to his friend, in whose person the whole of *la grande nation* had been insulted." Derwent made no answer, but, telling Mark to watch his fencing, took his ground. His adversary's attitude and contortions, when he made pass after pass, which Derwent parried with the utmost coolness and the most masterly skill, were so ridiculous, that Derwent actually laughed outright, and said aloud, "A truce, sir!"

The Frenchman stopped. Derwent, assuming a graver look, continued:

"Monsieur, I wish to God you would wear a mask, and dance about like a monkey a little less. You will kill me with laughter, which is unfair."

The furious Frenchman made no other reply than a thrust, with which he meant fully to avenge the taunt. Derwent's sword turned that of his adversary aside; and the Frenchman, who

had quite overbalanced himself, would have fallen against him, had he not stepped aside. As it was, he went past him head-foremost, and Derwent, unable to resist the impulse of the moment, swung round and followed him with a kick, which aggravated his fall, exclaiming at the same time, "contemptible mountebank!"

The English seconds laughed: the Frenchman, who had wounded Mark, boiling with rage at the sight, rushed up to Derwent, crying, "Defend yourself;" at the same moment making a thrust.

"Nay, two at once is past a joke," said Derwent, parrying it, and returning it through the body of the Frenchman.

He groaned and fell. His second ran up to him. Derwent's original antagonist had risen and was again close upon him.

"You shall suffer the same, sir," said Derwent, now roused to fury. The next moment, the Frenchman's sword, struck by Derwent's, flew from his hand; and Derwent exclaimed,—"There, your life is at my mercy. Take it, and be off."

The Frenchman, terrified at the sight of his bleeding companion, and frightened by Derwent's skill, which to him seemed supernatural, picked up his sword, and retired.

"Come along, Masborough; how do you feel?" said Derwent, taking his left arm: his right had been bound up by his second. That gentleman promised to stay and see how the wounded Frenchman got on, and to bring them the report of the medical man. The other accompanied Derwent and Mark to their hotel.

A medical man also attended Mark, and said there was great danger of a lock-jaw; and that he must be very quiet for a day or two. Mark then employed Derwent to write to Chessalette, informing him of the favourable state of the Count, and of his own inability to come and see him, on account of his wound. He desired him, however, not to tell the reason of the duel. But this direction was rendered nugatory by the circumstance of the presence of the messenger, who, during the time he had served Chessalette and his father, had acquired sufficient English

from the young ladies' maid to comprehend all that was said, and had learnt also at the hotel some particulars of the duel. He delivered the note to Chessalette, and told him all he knew of the affray, in the presence of the fair cause of it and her two sisters, Mary and Jane.

In half an hour's time Mark's second came to them. He said he had accompanied the Frenchman to their hotel, and that the medical attendant pronounced his patient mortally wounded. A magistrate was sent for to take his dying declarations, and he thought it would be advisable for Derwent and himself and friend to be present. The three accordingly left Mark, and found the magistrate already seated by the dying man's bedside. The wounded man fully exonerated Derwent. He said they themselves had been the aggressors and the challengers, and if there had been any unfairness, it had been on his part, in attacking Derwent before he had fully terminated his affair with his friend. He begged him to exchange forgiveness. Derwent was much overcome with the scene, and he

hurried back to Mark, more agitated than he had ever seen him. The wounded man expired soon after, and the magistrate thinking the Frenchman decidedly in the wrong, prudently recommended that he should be buried quietly, and that the affair should be kept as secret as possible.

It happened with Mark as his physician had predicted; lock-jaw came on, and his case took a serious turn. Derwent sat up with him. In the middle of the night word was brought that a gentleman wanted to see them. It was Chessalette. He had come into Florence in the darkness of the night, anxious to inquire about Mark, and to bid him good-bye, before he set off with his sisters for Paris. Seeing the state Mark was in, he was almost inclined to alter his plan, although every arrangement had been made for the journey; and he had moreover written to his father to state when he should be in Paris, and he thought it probable he might come to join them there for a short time. Whilst he was still undecided, the physician came in, and re-

ported that Mark was going on very well. His lock-jaw, he had no doubt, would cease when his hand healed, which he believed it would soon do. He would suffer inconvenience, but he thought he was in no danger whatever. It happened that this was the same person that attended the Count de Sadis, and from him Chessalette got the latest intelligence that he too was in a fair way of rapidly recovering from his wound.

Promising, therefore, to correspond, Mark and Chessalette bade each other adieu. Derwent and Mark now found Florence so disagreeable and so full of unpleasant recollections, that they resolved to quit it as soon as Mark should be able to travel. Mark said he thought he should be for turning his course to Paris, to join Edward Sileby, who had written him word he should in all probability take the opportunity of being there at the same time with his sister and Lord Branville, and he urged Mark to come too. Derwent agreed to go with him: he said he thought the gaiety of the place would tend more than any thing to dissipate the gloomy ideas

which haunted him ever since he had seen the poor Frenchman stretched on the grass before him. It was decided that they should spend a week or ten days at Milan, and then proceed to Paris.

Mark speedily recovered; and the last evening had arrived for their stay in Florence. So they thought: but it was not so to be. Derwent had walked out alone, and Mark began to be surprised at his staying so late. Surprise gradually increased into anxiety and alarm. The stories he had heard of Italian assassinations came into his recollection, and he recalled to mind the rancorous and malignant look, with something of triumph in it, with which the Frenchman who had fought Derwent had passed them that morning. He began to suspect that he had employed the dagger of the hireling to avenge his own defeat and the death of his friend. Uneasy at the thought, Mark put his pistols into his pocket, wrapped his cloak round him, and went to all their usual walks in quest of Derwent. He did not succeed, and returned to the hotel with his

fears deepening into certainty. Whilst he was considering what course he had best pursue, an officer of justice brought him the following note:

"I am in prison.—You can have access to me in the morning at ten. This is all I am permitted by the gaoler to write."

Mark asked the officer when, and on what charge, his friend had been arrested? The officer knew nothing about it.

"I am sorry for that," said Mark, "or I know you would tell me. You have a humane and benevolent look, and I am greatly distressed. You must permit me to make this small acknowledgement for the favour you have already done me in bringing me this note, which has relieved me from apprehensions yet worse than the truth."

The man took the bribe, and, looking round to see that no one was listening, he said:

"The gentleman was arrested close by the

prison. The Frenchman that fought him deposed, that he had stabbed his friend whilst he was engaged with you. The magistrate said, the deceased had stated differently. The Frenchman replied, that he was dying, and delirious at the time, and he insisted on an investigation, saying he had written to the French ministers. This frightened the magistrate, and so he said there must be a regular trial, though he had no doubt of the English gentleman's innocence: and so he committed him to prison, and there he will have to remain till the witnesses can be examined. But you can see him once a day." Saying which, the man departed.

"So, here 's an end to our scheme of going to Milan and Paris for the present!" exclaimed Mark, as he retired to his room, to pass a sleepless night. The next morning at the appointed time he visited Derwent. He found him in a separate room, grated and barred, but otherwise not unpleasant. The magistrate had given orders that his confinement should be made as easy as possible, as, though he dared not refuse to have

the case investigated, he was perfectly satisfied how it would end. The Frenchman had taken the opportunity of the departure of the seconds on both sides to revive the charge; and he had written to the government at Paris a flaming account of the murder of a French gentleman by an Englishman. Derwent seemed only to regret the adventure, as it prevented them from pursuing the more agreeable one of following the fair singer, whose strains had made so great an impression upon them both.

Mark was more impatient. He longed to set out for Paris, but felt it would be quite unjustifiable to omit visiting his friend every day; though Derwent begged he would by no means keep himself tied to the spot, arguing that it would be quite sufficient if he took steps for insuring the appearance of the two English seconds, and returned himself in time for the trial; but that in the mean time it was by no means necessary that he should be also a prisoner; and that, as he was allowed only to visit him one hour out of every four-and-twenty, it was not worth his while

to remain for that object. To this Mark would not listen, and it was well that he did not; for, the time when they ought to receive answers from the Englishmen, whose attendance they required, elapsed without any arriving; and they therefore held a council in the prison, as to what course it would be best to pursue. They ascertained that the gentlemen had deviated from the route they had been understood to have taken, and for that reason their letters had not reached them. Subsequent inquiries rendered it probable that they had returned to England.

CHAPTER X.

WHILST these events had been taking place at Florence, Mark's friends in England did not remain entirely *in statu quo*. The Squire resolved to see his purchase at Loseby, and to have ocular demonstration of the fidelity of Mr. Swallow's description. He did not mean to remain there for above a day or two, as his trial with Sir Charles Chessalette was now fixed to come on in about a week's time. He therefore thought it would be best to leave Giles and his establishment at Mrs. Brickman's, and to go to Bristol by the mail. But, previous to his departure, it occurred to him that he had taken no steps to defeat his brother's fraud upon Mark's superannuated godmother. He accordingly lost no time in writing her a letter, in which he briefly

set her right as to the true name of her godson, and promised to pay her a visit whenever he came into her part of the country.

On the Squire's arrival at Bristol, he walked off, all eagerness to explore his terrestrial paradise. He felt the more anxiety to find all his anticipations realised, as, continually as the day for his trial drew nearer, the countenances of his attornies grew longer, and his own fears waxed stronger. He had not got above a quarter of a mile beyond the last houses on the road, which he had been directed to take, when, on a guide-post to his left, he saw the words, "PRIVATE ROAD TO LOSEBY," and round the post itself was still clinging a large posting-bill of the announcement of the sale.

"I think I'm here before M'Adam," muttered the Squire, as he scrambled along under the hedge, hopping from one little clayey island to another, over various small straits of liquid mud, which connected one tiny Red Sea with another. Once his foot betrayed him, and he slipped down, and rolled quite over. He got up again, and

found himself unhurt, but his great-coat well crusted over. "Ah," thought he, "William the Conqueror tumbled on his nose when he landed at Pevensey, coming to take possession of England; and it was held a good omen!"

On a small hill to his right he saw a farm-house, and he resolved to go and get a brush, before he went on, and reveal himself as owner of the seat of the late James Racket, Esq., M.P.

He wondered much whether the farm-house stood on his own land. It was an old and dilapidated building, with one immense elm in front, and a little way down the hill was a thriving plantation of young firs. Behind it, and on the top of the hill, was another plantation of the same sort; in the midst of which rose a battlemented brick tower, which Mr. Masborough thought must be either a gamekeeper's station, or an object from the Manor House, which he doubted not lay not far beyond.

He met a boy carrying a bundle of sticks, and asked him, "who lived at the house before him?"

"There's nobody there but me and Mother," said the boy.

"Is your mother in, my man?" inquired the Squire.

"Ees," said the boy.

"I want a brush," said the Squire.

"By Goy, you may say that, and tell no lie either," exclaimed the grinning urchin.

"Suppose, now," said the Squire, "you were just to run in and bring me one."

"It's no farther for you nor it is for me," said the son of the sod; and off he walked, whistling away.

The Squire resolved to establish a school in the neighbourhood. He advanced to the house, and knocked at the door.

He waited a minute, and no one coming, he lifted the latch. A little ugly cur flew out, and, seizing his leg, tore his trousers; but ere he could commit further mischief, the Squire's toe was under his throat, and the wretched little quadruped went back into the kitchen, whirling through the air like a foot-ball.

Brandishing a spit in her hand, the mother of the boy, and the mistress of the dog, rushed to the door. The Squire held his stick up, on the defensive, and began the parley.

"My good woman—"

"Good woman me no good womans, my good man!" cried the angry dame; "what 's your business? we' ve no end to tramps and beggars—and worse than either, too. What do you want, I say? You 've killed my dog."

"*Notumque furens quid fœmina posset,*" muttered the Squire.

"Oh, you know English enough besides 'good woman,' I dare say," cried the dame;—"But may be he 's some outlandish countryman: what do you want, I say?—do you understand that, eh?"

"I did want a brush, my good—" said the Squire, checking himself from adding the offending vocative. "I came to borrow a brush; but I shall now be quite content if you will forgive me for hurting your pretty little dog, who, you see, took me unawares by the leg; and, poor fellow—poor fellow," continued the Squire, ap-

pealing to the animal itself, who sat upon its tail by the fire-place, "I 'm so fond of dogs; I would not have hurt him for the world—poor fellow—poor fellow."

The dog retreated from the Squire's offered caress, but the old lady was appeased.

"Ah, dear little soul," she cried; "it 's got a sad trick of flying at folks. If it was our new Squire himself, it had been all the same; gentle or simple. It would have made no difference."

"A very just and sagacious little creature," said Mr. Masborough: "Might I beg a brush, now? I believe I am going to the house of the Squire you spoke of. Pray what is his name?"

"Why," replied the old woman, "his name is Masbug, or something of that kind; but he 's not come into these parts yet. Where were you a-going to look for him?"

"I was going as far as the Manor House," said the Squire, "and made bold to call by the way for a brush, in case any of the late Mr. Racket's family should be still there."

"Why, Lord! don't you know *this* is the Manor House?" cried the dame; "and, bless you, none of the Rackets have been here since the old man's time, as was father to the member."

"*This* Loseby Manor House!" cried the Squire. "This miserable dwelling, fit for nothing but rats, old women, and—"

"What do you mean by that, you—" the old lady interposed, but the Squire proceeded.

"I meant nothing—never mind. This Loseby Manor? Impossible! where are the woods?"

"There, and there," the old woman cried, pointing to the two fir plantations.

"And the lake?"

"There," she said, pointing to a square piece of water, at the very outside not exceeding two acres in size.

"And the river?"

"Why, it runs through the pond, to be sure, and then down by that hedge, on the other side of it, or else you'd see it," replied the lady.

'See it! where's the sea, too?" inquired the ire.

"We don't see the sea from the Manor House, but you can from the Folly;" and she pointed to the brick tower in the fir-plantation. "You see the sea and Bristol, which is a finer sight still. I see by your questions you knew something about the place."

"Indeed, I knew nothing," replied the Squire.

"Mayhap," inquired the dame, "you may know Mr. Masbug, or whatever his name is. I'm told he's a queer one, but I should not say so; you may be his agent, or farming-bailiff, or something of that sort, come to survey?"

"Yes, I am come to survey," replied the Squire.

The old woman now invited the agent, as she considered him, into her house, and said he was heartily welcome to dine with her and her lad. The Squire said he could not stop; but the old woman pressed him so much that he thought it would hurt her to be refused, and he felt safe in his incognito. She said they were going to have a nice eel-pie; and, in a few minutes, the table was spread, the pie appeared, and, punctual to the ticking of his stomach, or sagacious of the crust

from afar, entered the Squire's first acquaintance, the lad of little refinement.

The old woman, bending over the pie, said, "The Lord make us truly thankful!" to which the Squire responded, "Amen;" and, breaking through the floury superficies, she thrust her pewter-spoon into the savoury contents.

Pull devil, pull baker!—what muse could sing whose plate was the oftener replenished, the Squire's or the young clod's!

The Squire's plate was once more advanced to the dish, like a ship to the wharf for its freight, when the good lady said, with all the delight of an artist whose work is approved of, "Ah, you may well say it 's good! Joe there says they 're just as good for all the world as real eels. Ar'nt they, Joey, lad?"

"I believe yer," said Joey, drawing back his broad knife from the inside of his throat, like an Indian juggler.

"Real eels?" cried the Squire. "What, then, in God's name, have I been eating?"

"Why, what 's just as good, and what we often

have," replied the lady, "nice young hedge-snakes. Joey catches 'em."

The Gods of old did not avoid with more horror the dish of his *hashed heir*, which Tantalus set before them, than did the Squire shun his refilled plate. Not Harpagus himself rose with greater disgust from the cruel repast of his own son served up to him by King Astyages, than did the Squire now rise. He swallowed an enormous mug of beer, and neglected to say "Amen," when the old lady devoutly cried, "For what we have received, the Lord make us truly thankful!" His first impulse was to fly the horrid place: his second resolution was not to go without making a few inquiries; in answer to which the mistress of the feast told him that "Mr. Racket's executioner had directed her to remain there till Mr. Masbug should come or send; that Mr. Racket had never resided there at all: he once came, intending to spend part of the shooting season there, but found no game, thanks to the Bristolian poachers; that only pack of hounds in the neighbourhood were a few couples of beagles; that all the old timber

had been felled and sold; and that two men (whom the Squire knew by the description to be Messrs. Hoggins and Higginbottom) had been there a few days previous to his visit; that they appeared very good friends, and she had heard them regretting they had lost such a bargain by holding separate interests, and wishing the sale had to come over again. "So do I," sighed the Squire. He then desired the good woman to let her lad ask Mr. Fallow, who, he found, had been Racket's principal tenant, and who lived in a farm-house not far off, to meet him the next day at the manor-house on business; and then slipping a half-crown piece into the hand which had caught the nice young hedge-snakes, and patting the head of Hector, his half pug-dog assailant, (and who might also have quartered the coats of the terriers and turnspits,) he set off on his return to his inn at Bristol, avoiding the lane, and going across the fields, in spite of the remonstrances of the old lady, whom he heard screaming after him not to make gaps.

As he sat at the inn, the thought struck him

that instead of going over the estate next day with Mr. Fallow, as he had proposed, he would make an offer of it to Messrs. Hoggins and Higginbottom. They could but decline it, if the old woman had been mistaken in her interpretation of what they had said; and if she was right, he should be glad to be well rid of his blind purchase, mud lane, fir-trees, Folly, and all, at prime cost. Having therefore inquired of the waiter, he found that Messrs. Hoggins and Higginbottom had now entered into partnership, and had lately built a large church by contract, from which it was supposed they had cleared a considerable sum. Mr. Masborough thought it would be a good opportunity for them to purchase; and he accordingly wrote a note offering to sell if they could agree upon terms. An answer came back to say that "Messrs. H. and H. felt grateful for the refusal, and begged to say they should be most happy to take Mr. Masborough's bargain off his hands." The Squire, seeing them so ready, thought he might as well be paid for his disappointment, and he therefore said they should have the estate for twenty thou-

sand pounds. To this note he received an immediate answer, saying, they accepted his terms; and, in the evening, Mr. Hoggins called on the Squire, and agreed to return with him to town, to have the conveyances made and the purchase completed. He also undertook to send word to Mr. Fallow that the Squire would not want to see him.

The Squire returned to London not, after all, much dissatisfied with his expedition. On arriving at his lodgings, he found a note from Messrs. Hook and Crook, desiring him to attend a final consultation with Counsel the next day, and also a long note from his landlady Mrs. Brickman, detailing a grievous story of a most base outrage upon her honour by his man Giles, who had entered her bedroom at midnight for the most improper purposes, and saying that it was only out of respect to his master that she had not had him up to receive his deserts at the hand of the magistrate.

Mr. Masborough summoned Giles to his presence, and showed him Mrs. Brickman's letter.

"Sir," said Giles, "I know what it is all about, without looking at it. Betty quarrelled

with our landlady, and left the day before yesterday; and the last thing before she went, she told me, says she, 'Giles Stiles,' says she, 'Mrs. Brickman has read every letter your master has had, and every thing he has has felt her finger and thumb. She has duplicate keys of every drawer and cupboard in the house, and skeleton keys,' —mind that, sir—'that would unpick the lock of St. Peter himself: and those keys she keeps under her pillow a-nights!' Does she? thinks I. So, last night, after Betty was gone—Betty used to sleep in the same room with her, and last night she was all alone—I waited till all was still, and then I got out of bed, and crept lightly into her room—and there was a gashly light from the lamp, and she looked like the black man's wife in the play like, and I stealed up to her, and insinivated my hand under the pillow, and felt the keys—and she moved—and she woke—and I thought she would have been frightened and taken me for a ghost, for I was all white, in my shirt. So, to save her from fright, I whispered,

'It's me, Giles'—and she lay still a minute; and then she sighed, and said softly, 'What made you come here? you know there 's no one in the house but me; what do you want with me, Giles?' and I did not know what to say, you see, sir; so, I said, 'Hush, I will go away;' and just then the keys made a noise, and I tried to draw them away, and she caught at them before I was aware, and put them down somewhere into the bed with her, and screamed out, 'murder, rape, fire, thieves, help, watch, murder!' And so I ran out of the room. And I do believe, sir, she was only angry about her keys."

"Giles," said the Squire, "I am partly of your opinion. But you acted indiscreetly and improperly in going into Mrs. Brickman's room. I will send her down a bit of a note, apologizing for your rudeness, and I may venture to say you won't go to her when she is in bed any more?"

"Upon my sacramental honour, sir, I do not mean to—"

"Never mind, you can't undo the past—'*infectumve reddet Quod fugiens semel hora vexit.*'"

"I can partly guess what that means, sir," said Giles, reddening—

"What, have you been taking lessons, then, whilst I've been at Bristol, Giles? I 'm glad of it," said the Squire. "But now, Giles, we must adjourn this debate, and you must take a note to Thavies' Inn; or a message will do. My compliments to Messrs. Hook and Crook, and I 'll be with them a little before the hour appointed for the consultation, as I have another affair to speak about; and tell them I shall want the Loseby title-deeds."

Giles set off with his message, and Mr. Masborough was saved the trouble of writing to Mrs. Brickman, as that lady happened to come into his room, and he took the opportunity of apologizing for Giles. Mrs. Brickman said she felt convinced he would not have insulted a poor lone helpless widow, if it had not been for the minx Betty, who had told him a story about skeleton keys, which were things she only knew of from report. Mr. Masborough begged her to think no more about the affair.

Whilst these things had been occupying the Squire, events of importance had been happening to other parties; nor had the sands failed to be running out of the hour-glass of old Time, even in the eyes of the noble bride and bridegroom. Lady Branville already thought herself an old married woman, and his lordship was tired to death of tête-à-têtes in romantic glens, or on cloud-capped mountains. Picturesque old ruins he voted a bore, meandering streams he consigned to all the Furies, and he heartily sympathized with Rochester's malediction upon the dog that bit him: — "Curse you, I wish you were married and lived in the country."

At length the honeymoon was over, and he proclaimed his intention of hastening to town, where, he said, urgent business required his presence; but if his dear Rosa wished to remain in the country, he would not control her inclination for the world. Should that be her desire, he would take her to Renstone Castle, leave her there, and return as soon as he could. Lady Branville, however, preferred a trip to London.

She had no wish to be buried at her age; and, as she should be sure to find plenty of friends, she said she could answer for being no tax on his lordship's time. His lordship looked as pleased as he could, and without loss of time they directed their course to the metropolis. London was not full, and they agreed they had come too soon. What was to be done? They were tired of the country. A trip to Paris was her ladyship's bright idea. She invited her brothers to join them. Sebastian declined, fearing to leave Mr. Smith in possession of the field. He promised, however, to visit them on their return, as he happened to overhear Mr. Smith telling Miss Lumley that his lordship had written to beg him to go with them to Paris, but that he had felt unwilling to leave his present agreeable quarters at their house for so long a journey, and therefore he had promised to visit them in London on their return. Edward had never been in Paris, and the temptation was in his case irresistible. He had no rival to keep him on the alert, and he thought he should have a chance of falling in

with his friend Mark Masborough, who, he doubted not, would join the party, as he knew his sister meant to try to persuade the Chessalettes to meet them.

To Paris, therefore, Lord and Lady Branville set off, accompanied by Edward. On their arrival, they found the Chessalettes were not there, and that they had written to the people with whom they were to have lodged, to say they were not coming. Lord Branville was grievously disappointed, as Charles was the greatest friend he had. They therefore resolved not to continue long where they were; and accordingly Lord Branville wrote to Mr. Smith to say, "he should be back again in London in a fortnight, when he should expect to see him without fail, and on pain of his being at a discount."

On the receipt of this letter, Mr. Smith read part of it aloud, and added an extempore postscript of his own, to the effect that his lordship said he should feel much hurt if Sebastian did not accept the invitation his sister had previously sent, and accompany him. This Sebastian de-

clared his readiness to do, and Mr. Smith now felt assured that his triumph would not be long delayed.

Nor was it: the scheme he had designed, the course he had meditated and matured in his mind, ever since the fatal day of his disaster with Belle Sauvage, were but too well accomplished. A day or two after their arrival in town, in an unguarded moment, when Sebastian had risen from the festive board, after he had "put an enemy in his mouth to steal away his brains," Smith proposed to take a turn out of doors, to refresh themselves. He had been on his guard, and only seemed to drink. Edward had accompanied Lady Branville to the opera. Lord Branville was fast asleep. "One more glass, Sib," said Mr. Smith, venturing for the first time to use the diminutive which Edward and Lord Branville always adopted. "No more, or my name must be Sip," said the already far-gone young man. "Just one, to our absent host, and then we will take a refresher in the open air." Sebas-

tian took the glass of madeira which Smith filled for him, and then they walked out of the room together, having rung the bell and told the servant to attend to the lamps and candles.

They walked to St. James's. Mr. Smith happened just to see a very particular friend go into a house there. He begged Sebastian to follow him; it was a gambling-house. There were plenty of confederates. Smith invited Sebastian to go shares in just one trial of luck: they won fifty pounds. Alas, too literally the die was cast: the first step is all. Sebastian had entered the fatal rings of the deadly vortex; he was in the hands of the demon of gambling. The state he was in, the novelty, success at first,—all conspired to his excitement and to his ruin. At one time he had won two hundred pounds; but before he came out of the house, he had given promissory notes to the amount of six thousand. Smith led him home, stupified and bewildered.

The next day, on awaking and recalling the scenes of the night before, the memory of his

loss came upon him: he felt horror-struck. He resolved to consult his brother as to what course he should adopt, having more confidence in his judgment than in his own on every point, except only the points of a horse. As he handled his razor with a nervous and unsteady hand, and looked upon his sickly face in the glass, an impulse, that he felt a difficulty in resisting, prompted him to cut the gordian knot of his embarrassment, and his throat at the same time. There was a knock at the door: he breathed an audible "thank God!" for the interruption to his horrid thought, and even the appearance of Mr. Smith seemed a relief!

"How are you, Sileby, this morning?" inquired Mr. Smith.

"Oh, rather headachy," replied Sebastian.

"By the bye," continued his evil genius, "what a cursed run of ill luck you had last night! I, too, shared your fate, but in a less degree."

"Did you? I thought you won," said Sebastian, going on with the tonsorial operation.

"Well, only tell me what to do," said Sebastian. "I mean to consult Edward; or perhaps Lord Branville would advance me the money; only, I cannot see how I shall ever repay it till my father's death. My allowance is three hundred a year, and I've a hundred and fifty of my own, the same as Edward has. Now, how am I to pay six thousand pounds, which, I think, is what I owe?"

"I am going to tell you."

Whilst Mr. Smith expounded his plan, Sebastian sat down opposite him in an easy chair, leaving the lather unmowed off to crust on one side of his chin.

"You know a debt of honour ought to be paid promptly. I don't say this on my account, for, God knows, I'd trust you till the day of doom, if I did not want to pay my own losings; but, as you must raise the money for the others, you may as well do it for all. Now, I know a Jew, as honest a knave as a Jew well can be, who will raise you the money on your reversion. Sileby is entailed, I know."

"But," said Sebastian, "I've heard, that is a ruinous way of proceeding. Had not I better try whether Branville won't help me out?"

"By no means," said Smith; "Lord Branville would be quite sure to tell his wife; she, in turn, would inform your mother—and then your father would be made acquainted with it. In short, the whole country would know of it. My plan involves, it is true, a certain sacrifice, which, after all, you may not live to feel, and secures present secrecy and quiet."

This plausible reasoning succeeded. Mr. Smith that very day introduced Sebastian to the most honest of the peculiar people, who agreed, as soon as ever the deeds could be engrossed, to advance him a nominal twelve thousand, of which he actually paid him eight thousand, taking his receipt for the whole; and with this sum Sebastian paid his debts of honour and some hundreds of his previously existing debts to tailors, horse-dealers, and saddlers; and had

left, when all this was done, little more than a thousand pounds clear, of which the lion's share was not long in gradually finding its way into Mr. Smith's pocket, by the magic of the dice-box and the cue.

CHAPTER XI.

As the hours of his confinement proceeded, and the time for his trial drew nearer, Derwent grew more patient of his restraint, and awaited the period for his release, which he never for a moment doubted of, with greater calmness. Mark showed more anxiety. They had had letters from the French gentlemen, who had acted as seconds to the deceased, promising to attend at the time appointed. These Derwent considered would, in addition to the testimony of Mark himself, be quite sufficient; but Mark was of a different opinion. He thought it not impossible that the wily prosecutor might have engaged them to make an assurance which they were afterwards not to fulfil, and he felt persuaded that the only safe course would be to

secure the presence of the English seconds likewise. Sufficient clue of their movements had been received to convince him that they had gone to London; and as there was yet time enough left to allow of his going to England and returning before the trial, he resolved to set off without further delay. He had friends at home, no doubt, who would gladly have made for him every inquiry which he might choose to direct; but, lest any delay should intervene, owing to the absence of those to whom he might write, or the removal of the parties themselves, he decided that it would be much better for him to go, as he knew them by sight, and would be able to follow them, and act as occasion should require. He travelled express, and was so fortunate as to discover the objects of his search the day after his arrival in London. He found them to be persons in such a situation of life that, though they had been enabled to gratify their islanders' locomotive propensities for once, it had been at such a sacrifice that they could not well afford it a second time. He therefore

advanced them the necessary sum; and on that being supplied, they showed no want of alacrity to render their services to their countryman in distress.

They, however, required a week to make arrangements for their unexpected trip; and Mark, thinking that he should put all risk of their loitering on the road out of the question by travelling with them himself, agreed to wait, and that they should all start together. He had originally intended to keep his being in London a secret from his uncle, but as he was to prolong his stay beyond what, when he formed that resolution, he had thought probable, he determined to join him at Stevens's; for, he argued to himself, though I were to remain in the city near these two witnesses, some one I know might pop upon me and tell my uncle. On reaching Stevens's, he was informed of the Squire's removal to Mrs. Brickman's. To the Regent's Park, therefore, he bent his steps, and amused himself with thinking of the kind old gentleman's surprise at seeing him so unexpectedly.

He had written twice to his uncle, but had not heard from him since they parted.

He knocked at the door. Mrs. Brickman herself appeared.

"Is Mr. Masborough within?" he inquired.

"No, sir,—he 's left."

"Do you know where he is gone?" inquired Mark.

"I believe he is gone into the country," replied the lady. "I heard his man Giles say his master swore he would never see London again; there were nothing but knaves in it; but I 'm sure I can say, for one, he was always fairly done for by me. I 'd scorn to wrong any gentleman as lodged with me—I would."

"Have you any idea, ma'am, to what part of the country Mr. Masborough is gone? Whether to his own house, or where?" inquired Mark.

"I have no idea," replied Mrs. Brickman; and Mark, finding that nothing was to be obtained to guide him in that quarter, resolved to inquire of Messrs. Hook and Crook.

At their office he found no one but a clerk, who

could give him no information, as he had not seen Mr. Masborough since the quarrel.

"What quarrel?" inquired Mark.

"Oh, sir," replied the man, "Mr. Masborough came one day in a thundering passion, and swore by all the saints in heaven and hell, and all the most shocking oaths in Christendom, 'that he 'd have masters struck off the rolls for a couple of scoundrels,' and behaved in the most shameful way, that—"

"Well, my friend," said Mark, "this is what I cannot hear, and it would be as well for you not to tell. It is natural you should take your masters' part; and not less natural that I should believe my uncle had received provocation before he said any thing harsh to them."

"I beg pardon, sir," said the clerk, "I did not know Mr. Masborough was your uncle. I 'm sure, if I had, I would not have said any thing about his behaving so violently, though I should have thought it all the same."

"No matter," said Mark. "We 'll drop the subject. Your masters will no doubt give me

his address, notwithstanding any misunderstanding. I'll just leave a line."

"I don't think they know it, sir," said the clerk; "but you can write."

Mark did so, and returned to the Albion, where he had taken up his quarters, as he found his two witnesses resided in the neighbourhood.

In the course of the same day he received a note to the following effect:

"Sir,

"I am directed by Messrs. Hook and Crook, in answer to your note of this morning, to say that they are unacquainted with the present address of Mr. Masborough, as he is no longer a client of theirs; nor will they in future have any intercourse with a person who has been guilty of such extraordinary conduct as the aforesaid Mr. M. has.

"I am, sir, for Messrs. H. & C.

"Your obedient servant,

"Coriolanus Sniggle."

This epistle, and the statement he had heard from Mrs. Brickman, convinced Mark that something serious had happened to ruffle his uncle. He had little doubt he would betake himself to his favourite Rotherington in his disgust; and he thought his own unlooked-for arrival there might serve to allay his angry feelings, whatever might have been the cause which had called them forth. He took his place for L—— without delay; and, before the coach started, he had just time to call on one of his witnesses and tell him he should be back on the fourth day at the latest; and also to leave a full written account of the circumstances of Derwent's detention in Italy, at the foreign secretary's office, together with a letter requesting the secretary to interfere, and saying he should call for an answer before he left England.

He met with no adventure, and nothing out of the ordinary line occurred to him during his journey to L——, except that at one of the inns by mistake a waiter brought him a beautiful roast chicken and bread sauce, which had been pre-

pared for the landlady's own dinner, instead of the stale Methusalem of the roost, who had been father to all the roast and boiled fowls in that house for the last three or four years; and who, even after death, had been served up four several times to four different sets of coach-passengers, without having the luck to encounter the knife of the carver. The maid flew into the room to the rescue, but arrived just in time to see Mark and his only fellow-passenger, that dined, divide the last of the spoil. She ran out of the room, and they heard her mistress give her instant warning for her eternal carelessness and blundering, and, at the same time, an order to charge three and sixpence a head for the dinner instead of half-a-crown.

In due season the coach stopped at L——; and while a chaise was being got ready, Mark, who had travelled all night, had time to change his dress. His rapid toilet being finished, he was quickly whirled away to Rotherington. He wondered as he went along what could have been

the cause of his uncle's rupture with his professional men; and he feared the lawsuit was not going on so prosperously or so speedily as he could have wished. His not having heard from him left him entirely at sea, and he had no means of verifying his conjectures. Then, the picture! The thought of that made the blood tingle in his veins, and he gave way to fancies of the most rapturous kind, and emotions of the wildest enthusiasm. The sweet Italian air and the exquisite English voice echoed in his brain: the whole scene of the evening when he heard them rose before him! But with them was associated the form of Derwent. — Derwent was now in prison; and that thought cooled the heated imagination of the day-dreamer.

Mark resolved not to lose the opportunity for an agreeable surprise. He bade the post-boy not drive up to the Hall, but stop in the lane just out of sight of the old gate-house. There he got out of the chaise; and, climbing through a high hedge, let himself by a narrow gate into the

kitchen-garden. A man was digging there. He looked earnestly at Mark, then touched his hat and went on with his work.

"Is your master at home?" inquired Mark.

"Yes, sir," said the man; "I seed him go into the Hall not three minutes ago."

Mark was now satisfied he was right; the Squire was at home; and he had not undertaken his long journey from London for nothing.

He passed through a door into one of the flower-gardens, and stooping under the breakfast-room window, till he got beyond a tall bay-tree, he arrived at the hall-door of the north-east front. He opened it gently, and looked round the entrance-hall. No one was there: he glided swiftly through, and knocked at the study-door. There was no answer. His heart beat. He knocked again, and, still finding no answer was returned, he thought his uncle must be dozing. He turned the handle of the door, pushed it, and found it locked. He knew it was his uncle's habit to put the key into his pocket when he was afraid any one might disturb his papers in presuming to brush

pace along the drawing-ro
above it, with a pocket edi
other classic, in his han
memory was faithful to his

Mark ran up the spacious
face met him at the landing
maid. "How are you, M
your master in the drawing-r

"I do not know, sir," said
there a short time ago. I an
us very little dreamt of seeing

Mark smiled, and passed
drawing-room door, expecting
book in hand, at his classical
room was empty; but it looked
were flowers growing

changed the character of the place with his own? Could it be possible that in his old age he had taken a wife to the Hall? But his eye rested on the wall near the door of his bed-room! There hung the beautiful form of his adoration, the fair semblance of that original, which he had heard, but which he had still to see! He folded his arms, gazed on the picture, and sighed. Again were Florence, and that evening, when he had heard her sing, before him.

"Ah, Matilda!" he exclaimed, "these are different and unromantic days; yet have I followed the fair phantom of thy exquisite beauty to sunny Italy; and I will follow thee, whom I have so long worshipped, till I find thee! If I were to die at the end of my pilgrimage, wouldst thou pity me like poor Rudel?"

He turned—in an attitude of amazement stood before him Matilda Chessalette, the living image of THE PICTURE!

CHAPTE

THE astonishment of bo
Miss Chessalette had ent
door which Mark had left c
close to him ere she sa
other hand, had not heard
fairy step, and had broken
at the very moment the atte
it fell upon him. To hear
tioned by a total stranger

dreamt of seeing her—in England, in the house of her father's angry foe. Yet, however unexpected was her appearance, the impression on his mind of the animate (though stamped there by the inanimate,) was too accurate and too true for him not to know her at once. His surprise was so great that it stupified him, and in some degree relieved him from feeling the full sense of his embarrassing situation.

The lady was the first to recover herself and to break the silence: "I am not aware who it is that does us the honour of this visit, and the gentleman has certainly the advantage of me, if I am known to him, as—"

"Yes, madam," interrupted Mark. "I—I—although I perhaps might be surprised at the honour of your visiting us. I—I am well aware that certain expressions — certain — in short, Madam, pardon my confusion at being heard saying aloud what I have hitherto only breathed to myself in secret and in silence."

It was now Miss Chessalette's turn to be con-

fused. She cast her eyes on the ground. Mark proceeded :—

"Although this is the first time I have ever stood in Miss Chessalette's presence, yet in my frequent visits to my uncle here, I have grown so familiar with her picture that she must pardon me if I addressed that in the language of an old acquaintance. But I must not forget that the acquaintance is not mutual. I hope, however, that I shall have the pleasure of not remaining a total stranger, as I perceive Miss Chessalette is not in a travelling dress, and therefore I trust that I see her as my uncle's guest, and that some happy event has occurred to reconcile our respective families."

"I conclude," said Miss Chessalette, "that I am addressing the nephew of Mr. Masborough?"

Mark bowed; and the young lady continued:

"I have heard my brother speak much and warmly of you, sir, and of the essential service you rendered him in this county when out hunting.

But I perceive you labour under some great mistake. Can it be possible that you are in ignorance that my father has lately won his chancery suit, and is restored to the possession of this our family residence?"

Mark absolutely started back with astonishment. His uncle's anger with his attornies was now partly accounted for; but then the servant-maid had said her master was at home. He mentioned this, and Miss Chessalette readily explained that she must have supposed he inquired for her new master, Sir Charles, who had taken her into his service, as being a native of the village. Mark recollected the girl's surprise at seeing him, and wondered at it no longer. He inquired whether Miss Chessalette knew his uncle's address, and she told him they did not know it; but all letters, which came for him, they forwarded to Mr. Cheatham at L——. She did not know whether he knew his address or kept the letters for him till he did. She requested Mark to be seated, and, then turning the conversation to Florence, she inquired after his wound, and

expressed her great regret and that of her brother and sisters at the unfortunate business, and its fatal termination to the adversary of Derwent. Mark related the story of Derwent's captivity, and the object of his own journey to England. Miss Chessalette told him that on their way to Paris they received a letter from their father requesting them to return home without delay, and see him take possession of Rotherington.

Their conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a little old gentleman with powdered hair, a blue coat, black tights and black silk stockings, and a most portentous length of shirt frill. A thick gold chain supported a glass; his fore-finger bore a large antique ring; and his face was plain and marked with the small-pox. Miss Matilda Chessalette introduced Mark to her papa. That gentleman bowed formally, and seemed to wait for an explanation of the object of the visiter in presenting himself. Miss Chessalette volunteered it: "Only think, sir, of Mr. Masborough's having come here on purpose to see his uncle!"

"I am sorry for his disappointment," said the Baronet.

"No, papa," said Matilda, "don't speak in that tone. Whatever misunderstanding might have arisen between Mr. Masborough's uncle and yourself, this gentleman has been no party to it. On the contrary, you forget he rendered Charles a most essential service."

"I did certainly forget it for the moment, Matilda," replied the Baronet: "but you have well reminded me, and I shall be proud to lighten my sense of obligation by any return in my power, and by showing Mr. Masborough all the hospitality our old place affords."

Mark said, he "was much obliged, but he was anxious to see his uncle, and his stay in England was to be only a day or two."

"In England?" inquired Sir Charles. "Ah, sir, I recollect my son telling me of an unfortunate affair in Florence, and of your being hurt. I hope you have recovered. Are you going again to Italy?"

Mark told him of Derwent's being there, and

the necessity for his return. The Baronet said he should be glad if he would stay at Rotherington the same time as he had intended to have done if his uncle had been there; and Mark consented to remain his guest for that day at all events. He inquired whether his son Charles was at home, and found he had gone to join the Branvilles in London. Sir Charles desired his daughter to see that she and her sisters took care of his visiter till dinner-time, as he was expecting a deputation from L——, respecting his standing for that borough at the next vacancy of Parliament. So saying he left the room.

"Shall we walk into the garden, sir?" said Miss Chessalette. "My sisters are there with Mrs. Sileby, whom I have heard speaking of you as acquainted. She is visiting us for a few days. My brother formed her acquaintance through the Lumleys, who used to be very old friends of ours, especially in Mrs. Lumley's and my mother's lifetime."

Mark said he had heard so, and that it was

those two intimate friends who had designed the grouping of the picture of the Seasons.

"Yes, we were quite girls then," said Miss Chessalette: "should you know my sisters from their likeness at that time?" she continued, looking towards the three ladies who were now in sight.

"Mr. Masborough, I declare!" exclaimed Mrs. Sileby, advancing to meet him. "Oh, I see you are not acquainted! These are Miss Chessalette and Miss Jane—Mr. Masborough. Well, and how have you left all friends? and how long have you been in England? and have you seen dear Rosa?"

Mark said he had not.

"Then, you cannot have been in London, or I'm sure she would have found you out," said Mrs. Sileby. "She never writes without naming you. Well, now, to think of seeing you here, when I heard you were in Italy! Ah, and I heard you were wounded, too. Let me see, they said you fought for some lady you were desperately in love with, who was spoken lightly of. How

was that? I must hear the whole story. Perha
it won't do for these young ones; those Italia
are such odd people for adventures. Well, th
you shall tell me when we can have a *tête-à-tê*
And to think of my being here, and you, too
I'm glad of that, and to see all is smooth an
friendly."

Mark said nothing to this torrent of questio
and observation, and it continued:

"You see, Mr. Charles Chessalette came an
called on us at Sileby as soon as the Baronet g
back to Rotherington—By the bye, I am sorry h
did for one reason, as your uncle I understood ha
left it by will to you. But we are all liable t
disappointments in this life—I won't speak
that; and so Mr. Sileby and I called on th
Baronet, and he would have me come and vis
his daughters here, as he said they had n
mamma and I had no daughter now. Poo
Rosa!—was she looking as pretty as before h
marriage? Oh, I forgot, you did not se
her!—There, these girls are laughing at m
mistake!"

The young ladies laughed, not at the mistake, but at Mark's look of amazement at the good lady's flow of words. He recollected that she had not formerly been so fluent; and the reason did not occur to him, that she had at that time been engaged in a deep game, which, like the deep games of whist and chess, induced silence and observation. Now, she had nothing to check the natural vivacity of her tongue, and accordingly she seemed to be making it pay for its former rest. The half-hour bell summoned the party to prepare for dinner. Mark did not inhabit his old quarters: they were occupied by Matilda. Mrs. Sileby was in the tiger-room; and so there was nothing left for him but to mount a story higher. He was the first in the drawing-room, and Mrs. Sileby was the second.

"And so you did not see my poor Rosa?" said the lady, starting a subject which Mark had no wish to pursue.

"No, ma'am," he replied, "I did not. I fear

you cannot assist me in discovering my uncle's address?"

"Really, no. You know I never had the honour of his acquaintance. I am sorry he lost the lawsuit, for your sake. You were, *entre nous*, from the first a bit of a favourite of mine," Mark bowed; "and somebody else's too, I can assure you. I considered it my duty as a parent to promote Rosa's prosperity in life; and besides, she was actually engaged to Lord Branville; or else, I'm sure I should have been very proud of you for a son-in-law; and she would, I now believe, have been full as happy with you."

Again Mark bowed. But he disclaimed the ambition of having aspired to what he was conscious of being very unworthy of.

"By no means, Mr. Masborough," said the lady. "We mothers have quick eyes;—but, as I said before, it did seem such a match—and you, though you are not a lord, are so clever and accomplished, and so brave, and so good-looking, and so—"

"Pray, spare me, my dear Mrs. Sileby," ejaculated Mark. "You quite overwhelm me with such a profusion of praise, so undeserved."

"Why, did not you write that pretty ballad that Miss Matilda sings every day without missing?—and did not you save her brother from the jaws of the river?—and did not you fight a fierce foreigner with mustachios?—and did not you bewitch my poor dear Rosa, and Miss Lumley into the bargain?"

"Madam! madam! Mercy! mercy! I vow I will make fierce love to you yourself, if you don't stop," cried Mark, laughing at the enumeration of his own exploits and qualifications.

"Oh, you impudent young thing! I've a great mind to box your ears," said the lady. "I'm sure, Mr. Mark, it will be your own fault, after all I've heard say of you, if you don't heal all family differences in this quarter. I am sure you may choose whichever of my three young friends here you prefer;—but, of course, what I say is all in the strictest confidence. I don't speak without book. I—think we shall not have rain."

Mark was astonished at the last remark, of which he did not perceive the connexion with the previous ones. The sound of the door closing behind him, however, explained the turn of the conversation to have been occasioned by the entrance of some one into the room. It was the Baronet himself, who said, instead of the deputation, he had received a message to say they could not attend on him till the next morning. He was followed shortly by the young ladies, and they by the announcement of dinner.

"Young gentleman," said Sir Charles, "my eldest daughter shall show you the way into the dining-room — but you know it. Come, Mrs. Sileby."

Mark led Miss Mary Chessalette down stairs; and, as Sir Charles and Mrs. Sileby followed them, he could not help overhearing that lady make some remark about a handsome young couple. He thought that the lady on his arm had heard it too, as he perceived a slight tinge spread over her cheek.

He sat next to her and next to Matilda. The

conversation turned on the poets of Italy and England. Mark preferred the latter; the ladies were for the former.

"I like to hear you, sir," said the Baronet, "standing up for your own country. Our poets are the best poets that ever set pen to paper; the best that ever were, or ever will be: and so are our statesmen, and so are our soldiers. It is a well ascertained fact, sir, that one Englishman can beat three Frenchmen."

"Why, papa," said Miss Jane Chessalette, "Mr. Masborough can hardly agree with you there. He did not find it so at Florence."

"You talk like a woman, child," said her angry papa; "that is to say, irrationally. Pray, did not Mr. Derwent send his man off to hell?"

"Oh, papa!" cried Miss Chessalette.

Matilda turned very pale: the thought of that affair was very unpleasant to her, as she knew it could be traced to her brother's duel with the Count de Sadis, of which she had been the

cause. Mark observed her, and quickly turned the conversation.

"I am partly of your opinion, Sir Charles," said he; "I do think three Englishmen equal to three Frenchmen — at least in poetry, of which we were speaking; but it was Italian poetry and not French, to which I must recall attention, for I am not to be led from the point, especially when I think I shall have your vote. Did not you say you were in favour of the English as compared with the Italian poets?"

"Yes, yes, the English, to be sure," cried the Baronet, who, however, was scarcely entitled to pronounce so decided an opinion, as he had never read one line of Italian poetry, and he had read some portion of the "Elegant Extracts." "I should like to hear any thing in Italian half so good as *Chevy Chase*, or *God save the King*, or *Cease rude Boreas.*"

"Chevy Chase is a fine old ballad, certainly," said Mark.

"I'm glad you agree with me so entirely,"

said the Baronet. "For my part, I hate all poetry, and think it infernal folly to stick words into lines with a jingling rhyme at the end of 'em."

"You are quite of Hotspur's opinion, sir, it seems," said Mark.—"You 'd say with him, I suppose,

> 'I 'd rather be a kitten, and cry mew,
> Than one of these same metre ballad-mongers?'"

"Yes, of course, I am of his opinion," said Sir Charles; "and a very wise opinion it is, too. Pray, is that in his works?"

"No, no," said Mark; "don't you recollect his speech to Glendower?"

"Glendower!—who was he? Do you mean a speech in parliament?" inquired the Baronet.

His daughters looked uneasy, and Miss Chessalette interrupted him: "You have forgotten, papa. Mr. Masborough was quoting from Shakspeare."

"Shakspeare, you puss!" said her papa. "He said Hotspur; and he ought to know best whom he was quoting. But suppose it was Shakspeare—

what Italian chap have you equal to Shakspeare, I 'd be glad to know ?"

" None," said Mark.

" Come, come," said the Baronet ; " it 's no use arguing with women. You and I have the best of it, and, in honour of our victory, let us have a glass of wine together."

They took their wine, and Sir Charles whispered to Mrs. Sileby that he looked upon his visiter as a very clever young fellow. The lady gladly assented. Her eyes bespoke her triumph. She felt like a missionary perceiving that a heathen is about to be a convert : she scented a match from afar. It was all the same to her which of the sisters it should be, so that it was one. Her own daughter was settled : her sons were from home ; and she had no occupation of that kind which ladies of a certain age so often have acquired a taste for, and for which Mrs. Sileby was peculiarly famous,—the ministry of the goddess Juno *Pronuba*.

After dinner Sir Charles passed the bottle in the ue style of the old school, making Mark drink

the health of the ladies, the King, and other toasts. He did not offer the most remote allusion to his lawsuit with his uncle, and all passed cheerfully and cordially amid the discussion of the merits of different vintages, — different breeds of dogs, — and different modifications of gun-locks: Sir Charles strongly supporting the fallibility of every thing but the old flint and steel. Mark suggested the danger of missing fire on rainy days, and described at great length, and with great pains and minute accuracy, a curious kind of percussion lock, for which a friend of his had taken out a patent, and "which he had brought to such perfection, and was enabled to employ with so much success, that his gun might be immersed under water for twenty-four hours up to within an inch of the muzzle, and yet it would go off; nay, it would go off even when so placed under water. The invention was a little hoop of paper painted and glazed with varnish, which contained a grain or two of the detonating powder, and fitted a small convex cylinder rising from the bottom of

the barrel, and containing the priming portion of the charge; and—"

A snore interrupted his elaborate picture of his friend's ingenuity. He perceived he had been wasting the sweetness of his eloquence on the desert air and the deaf ear; and so he rose gently, and transported himself up stairs into the drawing-room.

"I suppose papa is asleep?" said Miss Mary Chessalette. Mark smiled, and the lady continued:—"it is such a habit, that hardly any thing can prevent or rouse him!"

Mark said, "he believed he had driven him to it from a long and tedious description he had been inflicting on him."

"Of what, may we ask?" inquired Miss Chessalette.

"Of a patent gun-lock," said Mark.

"I am answered," said the lady.

"Come, my dear," said Mrs. Sileby, "you must amuse your visiter. You are the lady of the house; and Mr. Masborough is very musical.

You must play and sing to him. Rosa used to sing to you—didn't she ?"

"I only play," said Miss Chessalette ; "Matilda is the singer, and Jenny, there."

"Then pray, Miss Jane," said Mrs. Sileby, "do play that Italian air, whilst Matilda sings the Countess of Tripoli."

Matilda made some excuse, which was overruled, and Mark for the second time heard his own words sung to the Italian air.

Mary and Jane next played a duet, and Mark could not help telling Matilda how surprised he was at hearing in Florence words sung which he thought were unknown except to himself and Edward Sileby. Matilda replied that she as little dreamt that the author of them was within hearing at the time. Mark said, with a sigh, "it was a curious coincidence ;" and Matilda, at that moment recollecting the words she had overheard him uttering on their first meeting in the morning in the drawing-room, felt a little confused. To turn the conversation, she said, her brother had found them in Edward Sileby's dressing-case,

which a servant had brought him by mistake instead of his own, and that Edward had at first been afraid he should be accused of a breach of faith, but afterwards had given Charles leave to show them to her. That she liked them so much, that she copied them and showed them to her sisters. Mark half suspected that Edward had thought he would not be really angry at his letting his lines reach their object, but he determined to give him a lecture whenever he wrote to him, or saw him; and, as he was in London, he thought the latter would be likely to happen the soonest.

Mrs. Sileby was too experienced an observer not to detect very quickly to which of the three goddesses present the judgment of Mark would have given the prize of beauty. She resolved to aid and abet, by whatever means she could, the affair's coming to the consummation she wished. In addition to her usual motive, which she styled "a desire to see young people happy," she recollected that she had used Mark as a whetstone to her noble son-in-law's unenthusiastic advances, and that therefore she owed him a little debt of grati-

tude; and the thought also struck her that Mary-Anne Lumley had shown him an evident preference, and, that if he were not put *hors de combat*, her son Sebastian would yet have another and a dangerous rival to contend with, even if his young allies, Edward and Laura, should succeed in defeating Mr. Smith. She was conscious of their endeavours towards that object, and not without some hopes of their prevailing.

The good lady, therefore, threw the selected pair as much together in the course of the evening as she could. She got the other two sisters down to another duet, and insisted on Mark's taking Matilda to the picture of the Seasons, and on his deciding whether the girl or the young woman was the prettier, and whether her eyes had not grown full two shades darker, and whether her figure was not much fuller and rounder? Then she left them standing there, and went to the musicians.

Mark was quite unconscious of these manœuvres: but the opportunities they afforded him of conversing with the original of the Picture were

any thing but disagreeable or unwelcome. His conversation with Matilda insensibly reverted to Italy. She mentioned Derwent; and said Mrs. Sileby had told her he was rather a singular character, at least so she thought from what she had occasionally heard from her son Edward, who had been at college with him. Mark spoke warmly of his friend, and said his singularity was his pre-eminence, and what were regarded as faults were excellences above the appreciation of more common-place characters. His eye brightened as he spoke: his handsome features became animated in the sacred cause of friendship. Matilda Chessalette looked on his countenance glowing with energy and generous feeling, as Rosa had looked on it on the day of the chase; and the effect of the gaze was not dissimilar. Mrs. Sileby seemed to give her ear to the music, but her eye was on the other pair. She looked like a superior power watching the effect of secondary causes set in motion by itself; or, like a chemist, who has mingled two congenial substances, and waits to see the '*tertium quid*' result.

The hours rolled on rapidly; the night grew late. Miss Chessalette told Mark her father would go off to bed on awaking, and desired him not to sit up for him. The ladies retired, and Mark was left alone—the picture was there. Matilda had retired—his Autumn remained. Thought after thought crowded through his brain; a sort of delirium whirled his senses. Strange to say, his uncle was put into the back-ground of the vision that rose before him; his benefactor was in the shade! He seemed to be the only obstacle he should never be able to remove in his progress to the prize his soul was now firmly set upon. The picture had been more than surpassed by the beauty of the reality; and he could not help fancying that there was a congeniality between Matilda and himself in sentiment and ideas. Then the concatenation of circumstances that had produced their acquaintance, the accident of his seeing her picture, of his saving her brother, of his hearing her sing his song in a far country, of his fighting to vindicate her when unknown, of their unexpected meeting here, all seemed to favour the notion that

they were made for each other. Plato's fancy of an antistrophic and counterpart soul being co-existent in the world had ever seemed plausible and found favour in his eyes—now he was persuaded of its truth. But his uncle, who, he doubted not, must be more than ever exasperated by his defeat—how would he bear to hear of an alliance with a Chessalette? He knew his amiable nature and his affection and partiality for himself; but he knew, too, he was far from perfection, was strong in obstinacy, inveterate in prejudice. And then, where could he be now? Was he not acting ungratefully in not seeking him out in the day of his disappointment and vexation? These, and a thousand conflicting thoughts and emotions, arising naturally from recent events, and his present situation in the house which was to have been his inheritance, and which had now passed away back into adverse hands, excited him to unquiet. He walked up and down the long room, until a time-piece striking the hour reminded him how late it was. Upon which, taking his lamp, he went up stairs.

His room was at one corner of the long gallery, that ran from end to end of the house over the drawing-room. The blinds in the gallery were not down, and the full moon poured in floods of light at the large old windows. The earth at a distance seemed enveloped in a silver robe of mist; nearer the house, the dew could be seen, spangling the grass. Mark laid down his lamp, and entered the gallery. The line of light from the lamp fell on a portrait, which hung very low, and represented one of the race of Chessalette, a great naturalist and mathematician in his day. His hard features, his yellow complexion, his knotted brow, his prominent chin and compressed lip, bespoke the persevering student. Implements of chemistry were around him; a quadrant was in his hand. His grave, stern look seemed to reproach the wild and fantastic intruder of his silent reign. Mark looked at the face, and then at the moon, and then gave way to his former habit of soliloquising.

"Sweet queen of the night! How lovely

is the lustre of thy beam! How bewitching is thy spell upon the landscape! How soul-swelling the stillness of thine enraptured hour! To thee belong high thoughts and holy aspirations; under thy influence men learn to repent of the past, to resolve for the time to come! Day's garish eye is for detail, for bustle, and for business: it is the time for the merchant and the lawyer! Day is for the common herd, for the man of the world, for the ambitious, the matter-of-fact man, and the mean. Night is the selected hour for the devoted of their kind, for souls of gentleness, spirits of enthusiasm! Enthusiasm! dear delusion (if such thou must be called), how much better and holier are thy errors than the dreary truths of every-day existence. Tell me, philosopher, thou who arrogatest to thyself the proud name, and who callest the cloud a vapour, and anatomizest the free and ambient air into thy wretched hydrogen and nitrogen,—tell me, dost thou know what it is to shed the tear of rapture, or indulge e sweet pain of romance? Yet why pursue the

needless inquiry with one so very wise? Your Scotch-hearted philosopher is not tolerant of the fictions of poetry; he is

> 'A fingering knave;
> A being that would botanize
> Upon his mother's grave.'

He joys in the *ologies*, and to have his name followed by capital letters, F.R.S.E. M.D. F.S.A. He is a calculator of tables, a nicknamer of earths and stones, a classifier of weeds, a pickler of nauseous reptiles, a collector of filth, a dissector of vermin, a scrutinizer of veins and arteries—as my uncle would say, '*pectoribus inhians spirantia consulit exta.*' I beg your pardon, old gentleman, for having the talk all on one side, but—heaven and earth! what 's this?" cried Mark in a quick loud cry of surprise and fear, as the picture suddenly moved round towards him, and he heard a hasty step.

He was worked up to such a pitch of nervous excitement that the incident seemed supernatural;

a cold sweat started on his brow, and he stood expectant of some strange event.

"Beg pardon, sir—did not know any one was here," said a female voice. It was Mary the housemaid, the same that had lived at the Hall in the Squire's service. She was going along the gallery to her bed-room, having come from Miss Chessalette's room up a back staircase, which terminated at a door in the tapestry, against which the picture hung. Mark quickly recovered from his fright; and it occurring to him that she might have heard something said, before his uncle had left the place, as to where he was going, he made that inquiry.

"Why, sir," replied the girl, "the first report was that the master was going to his new place near Bristol, and—"

"What new place?"

"Oh, sir," replied the girl, "did you not hear of master's buying Loseby estate, and being taken in, and losing thousands of pounds? Well, only think! People said it would ruin him; but

we knew he was too rich for that. However, sir, Giles Stiles told me that he knew it was sold again; so I rather believed the other report, which was, that he went abroad after yourself. He never came here at all after he lost the lawsuit; but he sent Giles to take away his books and things, and to pay off his workmen and people; and Giles said he thought he would go after you, and then—oh dear, there is a light coming! good night, sir. If any of the servants saw me talking to you, sir, they would almost suspect—"

"Well, good night, Mary," said Mark; "you shall tell me all you know in the morning."

Mary stepped back through the door by which she had entered, and Mark went to his room.

As he left the gallery, he perceived that it was Sir Charles's valet, whose presence had disturbed their colloquy. The man advanced quickly as if about to speak; but discovering who it was, he bowed and passed on.

Mark lay long awake, thinking of his happiness

in being under the same roof with the object of his long admiration. But an uneasy thought of his uncle would constantly come across his mind, and he felt a kind of alarm, which he half-construed into a presentiment, that, whilst he was enjoying the feast of his eyes, it would have been better had he been ascertaining where the Squire had gone to.

At breakfast Mark perceived there was a jest of some kind lurking about the Baronet's eye and the corner of his mouth, and he could not help suspecting that he was the object of it.

"Have you slept well, young gentleman?"

"Very well, sir."

"No fear of ghosts in the old place?" inquired the Baronet.

"None, oh none at all. I don't believe in ghosts," said Mark.

"I *do*," said Sir Charles; "I *know* them to exist."

"Oh, Lord! Sir Charles," cried Mrs. Sileby, "for God's sake don't talk so fearfully. I 'm

glad it's morning. I should never be able to sleep in this great house again, if I thought it was haunted."

"Well," said Sir Charles, "we will not discuss the point before you; but do you, Mr. Masborough, remind me after dinner to prove this to you."

"You are very kind, Sir Charles, to make my stay so much a matter of course," said Mark. "I fully intended not to prolong my visit much after breakfast."

"Oh, we will not hear of it," replied the Baronet; "you shall stay and be convinced. Mrs. Sileby,—girls,—don't let him go; you are his bail, and responsible for his not running away. I shall be engaged all the morning with my good friends the electors from L——, but at dinner we shall meet; and you shall stay here all the time you would have done, if you had found the party whom you expected."

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Sileby, "you must stay, Mr. Masborough. Beaux are not so plentiful in this neighbourhood, and you hear Sir Charles is going to desert us for politics."

"You will stay, sir?" said Miss Chessalette.

"That's a good girl, Mary," said her father, "mind and keep him; and you two, Matilda and Jenny, have you nothing to say—not a word?"

"We say the same as Mary, papa," said Jane.

"No, you don't, you say nothing—come, Matilda."

"I hope Mr. Masborough will let us persuade him," said the lady appealed to.

Mark said he could not hold out against the kindness of the Baronet, and the entreaties of four ladies, and agreed to stay till the next day at least.

"Right, sir," said the Baronet; "of four, or by-the-bye, should I say, five? Young gentleman, a word in your ear; did you never read the tenth commandment—'his man-servant, his *maid*-servant'—hum, hugh, ha?"

Mark protested his inability to understand the Baronet's meaning. At the moment he had forgotten his last night's adventure, and he had no reason to know Sir Charles was aware of it.

Sir Charles continued: "Well, all I say is, mind that commandment." Mark suddenly recollected that it was the Baronet's valet who had seen him in the gallery, and he felt persuaded he had told his master a wrong version of the story.

The ladies pretended to be talking amongst themselves; but, whether it was their own conversation, or their father's observation, that caused it, there was a blush on the cheek of one of them at least. Mark said,

"Ah, I recollect I met a servant in the gallery, and I did certainly stop and speak to her, as she lived here with my uncle a long time."

"Well, all I can say, then," said Sir Charles, "is, jealousy has strange eyes. My poor fellow, La Chafoüin, is in love with the girl, you must know; and he swears he saw you squeeze her hand, and put her through the tapestry door, and promise to meet her there again to-night. He is so agitated about it, that he made me *feel* for him, for he burnt my head with the curling-irons this morning. So that's all;—now, don't break

"What about your daughters, Sir Cha
inquired Mrs. Sileby, who had heard every
"Nothing, ma'am, nothing," said the Ba
"I was only lecturing my young friend h
La Chafoüin's entreaty."

"The Baronet is pleased to rally me,'
Mark, desirous of setting the affair in the
light, "because I spoke to Mary, his hous
and formerly my uncle's. She startled m
much last night by opening a door in the ta
as I was musing in the gallery. I fairly t
the old mathematician was coming out
frame, because I indulged in some remark
his quondam pursuits."

"This from you, who don't believe
supernatural?" said Sir Charle
taken by surprise," replied Ma

The Baronet nodded to Mark, bowed to Mrs. Sileby, gave his daughter Jane, who was seated next to him, a pinch on the ear, and walked towards the door. He was met by a footman bringing up the letter-bag, which came daily from L—— ; and at the same time he announced that the deputation was at the hall-door.

"I will receive them in the dining-room," said Sir Charles. "Show them in; and, Mary, here's the key of the bag,—if there is any letter for me, send it to me;" and so saying, he left the room.

CHAPTER X

THERE were some newspaper
Miss Chessalette handed to M
which was for Mrs. Sileby.
my husband, I see," she exclai
thing is the matter." That s
rious was the matter would hav
any one that had watched the
less scrutiny than Alexander d
cused physician.

After reading the contents,
it up with a trembling hand,
by the arm, she said she

"My dear Mr. Masborough, I trust I may use the privilege of a friend with you."

Mark assured her his poor abilities were at her service, and she proceeded:

"Of that I had no doubt, or I should not have decided upon asking such a favour. Your friendship for my dear Edward I well know, and nothing could be more gratifying to his father and to myself, than a selection which did honour to his head and heart. Whether you take any interest in poor Rosa, I cannot tell,—I once thought you did; and if I appeared not to encourage any greater intimacy in that quarter, I had my reasons. But to come to the point of my present interview with you. My poor boy, Sebastian, I find by my husband's letter (which encloses one from Edward,) is in gaol; you may well be surprised. Edward has written to his father a long detail of the villany of Mr. Smith, whose victim at the gaming-table, and in bad company, my son has been. He had great difficulty in prevailing on his brother to allow him even in this crisis to

make the communication to Mr. Sileby. It appears, Sebastian raised a large sum on his reversion, with which he relieved himself from his then existing difficulties. The remoteness of the day of payment, the readiness with which Mr. Smith arranged the business, made the whole too light a warning; again, his debts were pressing. The Jew, whom he had borrowed from, would advance no more on the reversion. Sebastian gave a bill;—let me see, I must look at my letters—oh, for nine hundred pounds. This became due—how was it to be paid? Sebastian found himself forced reluctantly to apply to Lord Branville. His lordship, you must know, had had words with both him and Edward respecting his treatment of Rosa; which they looked upon as so harsh, that Edward had first interfered, and Sebastian had seconded him. However, in this emergency, Sebastian consented to yield to Smith's advice, and allow him to intercede for a reconciliation, and for the loan of the money; there being this time, he said, no other alternative. He did so, and his lordship gave Smith a cheque.

Sebastian presented it, and received the nine hundred pounds. In a day or two, on looking at his banker's book, Lord Branville sees the entry, and the cheque for £900. He is quite confident the one he drew for Sebastian was only for six hundred. Smith confirms him in this, and says he well remembered it was so, and that it was six hundred pounds he asked for, as he understood that was the precise sum Sebastian wanted. Sebastian says, that Smith well knew he had given his bill for nine hundred pounds: this Smith denies: he says, in the first place, he did not know the precise amount of the bill; and secondly, even if he had, he could not tell that Sebastian had no money left out of the large sum he had so lately borrowed: and he argues, that, as the cheque had only passed through the hands of them two, it must have been altered by one of them: now, he could have no possible assignable motive for the forgery, whereas Sebastian would be the party to profit by it, was pressed for money, as it seems, and was not likely to have been detected, had it not happened

that Lord Branville had looked over his banker's book at a time that was not usual for him. Edward is fully convinced that Sebastian, who is of a very honourable, though weak and foolish, character, is quite incapable of the act imputed to him; and of this he endeavoured to persuade his lordship. He boldly charged Smith as the forger, suggesting the double motive of revenge for former affronts, and the wish to drive a dangerous rival out of the field. And this is no doubt the truth of the case: but his lordship, owing to the recent quarrel I told you of, was not very favourably disposed either towards the advocate or the accused; he listened incredulously to what appeared to him so highly improbable; and, it must be confessed, appearances seemed much more against my poor boy than against Mr. Smith. So his lordship decided: and Mr. Smith insisting, that after Edward's insinuations he had a right to have the matter fully investigated and his character cleared; and Lord Branville being persuaded of Sebastian's guilt and ingratitude, he gave way to present indignation, and forth-

with had Sebastian arrested on a charge of forgery. I have told you at great length every particular contained in Edward's letter to his father, in order that you might be fully in possession of the case. You are going to London: Mr. Sileby must go. But he writes word he is ill in bed from agitation. He is liable to attacks of paralysis, and I dare not trust him alone. I wish you to accompany him, and to do what you can towards hushing up this dreadful business. Mr. Charles Chessalette has a great regard for you, and owes you a large debt of gratitude. He is Lord Branville's most intimate friend, and I want you to urge him to use his influence with his lordship. I fully believe Sebastian is innocent, but he has a wily enemy to deal with, and I should fear the result of a trial: almost equally do I dread the exposure of one. At all events, as you are going to town, I trust you will render what service you can; and I have little doubt of your success, as, of course, Lord Branville for his own sake, when he cools, will drop all pro-

ceedings. I have the greatest reliance on your discretion and judgment, but poor Mr. Sileby is a sadly nervous creature. I cannot go myself, as I must not do any thing to excite suspicion that something is going on wrong; and it is arranged that I am to take the Misses Chessalette back with me to Sileby in a few days, and several people are invited to meet them. So it would not do for Mr. Sileby and me both to be absent. If the affair can be hushed up, it may remain for ever unknown. He writes me word he is to start at one o'clock to-morrow, his medical man having told him that it might prove fatal, owing to the medicine he had been obliged to administer, if he moved sooner. Is it asking you too much to accompany him?"

"By no means," said Mark, feeling less sanguine than Mrs. Sileby, but unwilling to crush her hopes of secrecy and a favourable termination of the affair; "I will do all in my power, and I hope I may be successful."

"Thank you, dear Mr. Masborough," fer-

vently exclaimed Mrs. Sileby, the tears of real feeling flowing from her eyes. "This is genuine kindness."

"Oh no," replied Mark; "you know I was going. I will get some one to go over to L——, and order a chaise to be here—let me see, not later than nine in the morning. I shall be at L—— before ten. I have one question to ask of Mr. Cheatham, which will not hinder me; and I should be at Sileby by half-past eleven, which would insure my being there before Mr. Sileby had started."

"A thousand thanks," said Mrs. Sileby. "Now we must clear up our faces, and look as if nothing was the matter. Let us go back to the girls—your time there is precious. I appreciate the more your readiness in granting my request, as I know the Baronet will press your stay, and as I cannot but see the favour one of the party finds in your eyes, and which I must say seems, and not without good reason, to be mutual."

Mark tried to look innocent and surprised, and Mrs. Sileby continued :

"Nay, you need not put on that look. However, I hope at some future period to insure your meeting at our house. This time of their visiting us, you will, I know, have to return to Florence on that unpleasant business. What a friend you are to all who are in trouble!"

"In the Florentine affair," said Mark, "I was a party concerned. But I assure you I have an equal interest in what you have just confided to me. You know, dear Madam, Edward is my old and dear friend; and though I have known your eldest son only for a short time, I agree with his brother and yourself in believing him quite incapable of doing what he is charged with. I have no doubt Edward is right in his suspicions of Smith."

Mrs. Sileby squeezed Mark's hand warmly, to express her gratitude; and they returned into the house.

By the time they rejoined the young ladies, the countenance of Mrs. Sileby bore no trace of the recent scene. It wore its usual placid smile. The shower was over, the sun again shone forth. The

management of the muscles of the face is one of the tricks of diplomacy, in which, as in most others, the masters of that not very exalted art are closely rivalled by females past the bloom of youth. Both of them can equally, insincere, wear the look of sincerity; both of them understand how to use words which shall be found able to bear a different interpretation to that which intentionally they conveyed to the hearer. Mrs. Sileby was the politician of the drawing-room, the diplomatist of the family circle. Her brain was busy in devising by what plan she should give Mark the most of Matilda's company during the day.

"The carriage is gone to be painted, is it not, Miss Chessalette?" inquired Mrs. Sileby.

"Yes, it is at L——, at Mr. Lacker's," replied Miss Chessalette; "however there is the phaeton at your service; but it will only hold two besides the driver."

"Oh, it was not for myself," said Mrs. Sileby.

"For Mr. Masborough?" inquired Miss Chessalette; "he can have it ordered when he pleases."

"No, dear child," said the lady; "I have set Mr. Masborough a task, to shoot me a couple of rabbits. You know we have none near us, and I should like to send Mr. Sileby a couple. He is poorly, and I know he would like them."

"I dare say there are some in the house; indeed, I know there are—I saw the keeper bring them," said Miss Jane Chessalette.

"Oh, but that will not do; Mr. Masborough is a favourite of Mr. Sileby's, and he would fancy them better if he knew he had shot them: sick people are so whimsical, you know. To be sure, we could send a couple of those you have in the house, and say Mr. Masborough had shot them, and that would do as well; or we could lay them on the grass, and he could shoot at them, and then there would be no untruth."

Mark could not resist bursting out into a fit of laughter at this distinction. Mrs. Sileby gave him a look of reproof, and went on:

"You need not laugh; I am not going to have you do this. I dislike untruth and I dislike deception, I assure you, very much, when one can attain one's end just as well without either; so, I

shall command you to the field presently. I have a bad headache, or I should like to go to L—— myself; but as I cannot, what I want to know is, whether you, Miss Chessalette, would mind making that your drive? I have a very particular commission there, which I should like Jane to assist you in. You know your tastes agree with mine, better than Matilda's—and so I want her to stay at home and keep me company, and nurse me, if she will do so, after I have been so rude as to deny her taste."

Matilda said she would willingly stay with her; and the other two agreed to undertake the commission.

The phaeton was ordered; and Mrs. Sileby, going to a table, wrote a few lines, which she sealed up, and, delivering the paper to Miss Chessalette with much mock formality, said:—

"There, young ladies, there is your commission. You are to open it and see what it is as soon as you get over the bridge. You know sailors are often sent to certain latitudes, and then told to open their sealed orders for instruction as to

their further destination. It will serve you for a subject to exercise your ingenuity on, to guess what I have set you to do."

The young ladies ran out of the room to get ready, and Matilda went with them.

As soon as they were all gone,

"There, now," exclaimed Mrs. Sileby, exulting in the success of her plot. "Now, start off for the rabbits, and come back in half an hour. Mary and Jane will be off by that time. I will have my headache so bad that I will retire to my own room to lie down; and before I go, I will propose a walk to you and Matilda. You must not stay above half an hour out, lest Sir Charles should have finished his speech to the deputation, and come and make one *de trop*—what says the epigram?

"'Un et une sont deux,
Nombre fort heureux
En gallanterie;
Mais quand une fois
Ces deux sont trois,
C'est diablerie.'"

"But the rabbits?" said Mark; "suppose I should not meet with any in the time?"

"Then come in without them. Mr. Sileby, you know, is going to town to-morrow, and will not want them. If he did, you know there are plenty ready-shot."

"But not of my shooting, dear madam, and sick people are whimsical you know; and I—"

"You 'll affront me if you go on in this way," interrupted Mrs. Sileby. "I 'll change sides, and ruin my own cause."

"Like Warwick the king-maker," said Mark.

"I don't know much about Warwick," replied Mrs. Sileby; "but I know you are a silly fellow if you quarrel with me."

Mark said nothing would grieve him half so much. This *façon de parler* Mrs. Sileby chose to interpret literally; and, putting out her hand, she said, "Well, this once I forgive you, though I think you are not so grateful as you should be for what I 've done; but you don't know it all. I 've sent the dear girls on a fool's errand: when they open my note, they 'll find directions to buy a stuff gown for Rosa (stuff you know is the staple commodity of L——), as a remembrance of me,

sent from the neighbourhood of home. *Entre nous*, as Lady Branville is rich and Mrs. Sileby poor, I shall keep it myself, but I shall profess that I mean to send it by you. It will have served the first object of its purchase, when it has secured you a long day all alone with Matilda. I felt I owed you something, and this is only a small part of the payment."

Mark felt ashamed at lending himself to such a plot of petty duplicity: but the lady had woven it on his account, and he thought it would be ungracious to defeat it; besides, it was very tempting.

Mrs. Sileby now despatched him on his shooting expedition, telling him to take one of the Baronet's guns, for which she would be responsible, and that she should say it was by her orders for the sake of her sick husband. Mark was scarcely out of the room when the young ladies returned.

"Oh, Mrs. Sileby, we are so curious!" said Jane.

"What can it be?" said Miss Chessalette.

"You will see, dears," said the lady. "And, by the bye, when you are at L——, do call at Lacker's and see how they get on with your carriage. He has good paints, but knows nothing of heraldry: he made our lions look like three pigs rampant. Give them very particular instruction about your coat of arms."

Away went the two sisters: and Mrs. Sileby, recollecting her headache was going to be worse, began to feel it throbbing. Matilda brought her the eau-de-Cologne.

"I wonder," said Mrs. Sileby, "whether Mr. Masborough has met with any rabbits? Woe betide them if he has! He is such a shot! He does every thing well that he undertakes. Sebastian says he is the only man he should fear to ride a steeple-chase with. Poor dear Rosa used to admire him so on horseback. Then he is so clever, and so handsome, and so unaffected. Don't you think him very, very handsome, dear?"

"He is good-looking," said Matilda, screwing the stopper into the eau-de-Cologne bottle.

"And he is so accomplished; he waltzes so elegantly. I used to think him and Rosa such a couple! Heigho! And he is so musical. He says your voice is the sweetest he ever heard."

"I 'm sure then he 's no judge," said Matilda.

"Oh, but he is:—dear me, how my head aches! Just play me a tune, love."

"Will not that make your head worse, ma'am?" inquired Matilda.

"Oh, no, love," said Mrs. Sileby. "My headaches are not common ones. Play me something soft, or sing me 'The Countess of Tripoli.'"

"Nay, my dear Mrs. Sileby, I cannot sing that. Suppose Mr. Masborough should come in before he sets off in quest of your rabbits—he would think I 'm always singing it."

"Well, love, then wait a little, and sing it me presently. I wonder how long the deputation will be?"

Matilda played some low soft tunes, and Mrs. Sileby sat on the sofa. The Baronet entered, and inquired for Mark. Mrs. Sileby said he was

gone out on an errand for her, which would occupy him some time; in fact, she had taken the liberty of lending one of Sir Charles's guns that he might just shoot her a couple of rabbits for poor Mr. Sileby, who had written to say he was very unwell."

"Ah, I'm sorry for that," said the Baronet; "and I'm glad Masborough has found a way to amuse himself, and I'm sorry I'm obliged to be away all the morning; and I'm glad you lent him my gun. I've been laying it on thick to my friends below. I've done my speech, and they are going away when they've had something to eat. I just came to apologise to Masborough, and I'm going back to my room; for two of the deputation are to stay and go over the last election poll-book with me. By the bye, I think, Matilda, you girls have some red ink amongst your drawing apparatus. That will do to set down our votes; and black for the blackguards on the other side;—Gad, now, that's so good, a'nt it? I must say it over again to them below."

Matilda brought her father the red ink, and the Baronet bore it off, full of the pun he was about to re-extemporise.

Mrs. Sileby cast her eyes to the time-piece, and perceived that the hour was advancing for Mark's return. Accordingly she begged of Matilda to play her favourite ballad. It was finished, and Mark was not returned. However, he was not long after his time, and he announced to Mrs. Sileby that he had left the produce of his expedition on the hall-table.

"Have you shot two?" she inquired.

"Three," said Mark.

"Well done!—You do certainly excel in every thing; you could not have missed a shot!"

"I had only two, and it was purely accidental that at my second fire I shot two rabbits. I actually only saw one."

"Oh, my head does ache so!" said Mrs. Sileby. Mark looked out of the window to conceal a face which had not acquired the power of concealment of the sham invalid.

"What a place this is!" she continued; "I

do believe you have no medical man nearer than L——."

"No regular practitioner," said Matilda.

Mark saw the lady's aim, but though he had not had virtue enough to refuse tacitly to take the benefit of her manœuvring, he could not make up his mind to be an active party in it. He well knew that she had in her eye a trip to Mr. Simple, who kept a grocer's and mercer's shop at the nearest village to Rotherington; and who, as his was the only shop in the place and for miles round, added to his other stores a small supply of those drugs and medicines which were most in requisition amongst the poor.

"Oh, dear, my head is so bad! Mr. Masborough, you are a dear kind fellow," she cried; "I know your goodness of old. Should you mind walking as far as Mr. Simple's, and asking if he has any ipecacuanha lozenges? They're the only things that ever relieve my head. Oh, dear!"

Matilda said she would send off a servant to L—— for some: there they would be sure to

have them, and she thought it very unlikely that Mr. Simple's village-store should be able to supply them. She had never heard they were good for head-aches.

Mrs. Sileby bit her lip, and shook her head at Mark to reprove him for his backwardness in seconding her scheme.

"Nay," said she, "now you make me quite uncomfortable; I thought it would be a nice little walk for you two to get me what I wanted, and at the same time would leave me alone and at liberty to lie down, or, at all events, not to talk. I ought to be quite quiet."

Matilda said that Mrs. Sileby should be left to herself, and she would walk with Mr. Masborough with much pleasure; and accordingly she went to her room for her bonnet.

"Oh, you treacherous, faithless ally," exclaimed Mrs. Sileby, "you leave the whole brunt of the war on me. You are no general; however, yours is the reward of my labours. Make the most of your time."

Mark laughed; said he was a novice in the

art, but had no doubt he should in time become an adept with such an accomplished mistress. Matilda quickly returned equipped for her walk, and as Mark led her out of the room, Mrs. Sileby waved her hand to him in triumph.

Their road lay down a turf lane, then in the fields, and then returned to the lane again. Their conversation was on general subjects, on nearly all of which Mark found Matilda well-informed, and for the most part agreeing with his own opinions. She was well read, too, in the literature of her country; and her sentiments on poetry were correct and refined. From poetry to music the transition was natural; for what would music be, if translated to the understanding, but poetry?

Such themes introduced their minds to each other, whilst the sweet weather, and the freshness of the rural scene, had a sensible effect on the feelings of both. An impulse to give the conversation a more closely interesting and personal turn came over Mark. The fear of his uncle was

not before his eyes—he was not thought of. No wonder; Mark was now alone with the one he had sought so long, and who, when found at last, had so more than realized his anticipations! Mrs. Sileby had hinted that he found favour in her eyes; and though he felt that an offer of his hand would be premature, and appear presumptuous, he thought he might venture in some sort to prepare the way for making it hereafter. He therefore remarked how familiar that neighbourhood had become to him, and how curious it was that he should be visiting there with those whom he had so long been taught to regard as enemies.

"I think all family feuds and general prejudices wrong," said Matilda.

"So do I," said Mark, "but I am not withou a few."

"Indeed! I should have thought from Charle panegyrics that you were above every thing of kind," replied Matilda.

"Then your brother has been so good favourably of me?" inquired Mark.

"Oh, very! but you know," said Matilda, smiling, "he may have been led away by gratitude."

"Do you think so?" inquired Mark.

"I can't tell. You know I have had no time for judging," said the young lady.

"No," cried Mark, "you have not known me so long as I have known you—by sight. The picture of the Seasons had made your features so familiar that I should have known you; and I am sure, when I followed you to Florence—"

"Followed!" exclaimed Matilda.

"Yes, followed!" replied Mark. "I was Quixotic enough, as I fear you will call me, to make a sight of the original of Autumn the object of my tour."

"Well," said Matilda, laughing, "I certainly must adopt your phrase of Quixotic, if that was your object."

"It was," said Mark, gazing on the beautiful cheek where the ill-concealed blushes were spreading and deepening—"and I found the picture, exquisite as it is both in truth and

in beauty, was far from doing justice to the more perfect original. I found—"

"Bless your pretty face! please to have your fortune told," cried a dark slight figure of a gipsy, creeping through the hedge, close to which they were walking.

"No, no," cried Matilda.

"Won't you try the fates?" inquired Mark.

"Oh, no," said Matilda. "Think of Mrs. Sileby's headache, and let us not waste our time."

"Bless your honourable honour's lucky good-tempered face," cried the girl, showing her white teeth and winking her arch black eye. "Do 'e now have your fortune told. For one little half-crown I 'll tell you all about the lady, whether she 's dark or fair,"—here she curtsied to Matilda; "has black eyes or grey ones,"—again a curtsey; "when you shall be married, and how many children you 'll have, half a dozen or a dozen."

"Do give her something to go," said Matilda. "I have forgotten my purse. You must pay this

lady, and for the lozenges, if we get them." Mark handed the gipsy two or three shillings from his waistcoat-pocket.

"Bless you for a good-natured, good-looking young gentleman," cried the girl. "When you've left the lady, come to me back again, and I'll tell you all about what you'll like to hear."

Mark and Matilda walked quickly on, leaving the Sibyl to waste her promises of prophecy on the desert air. The little village was in sight. They entered the shop of Mr. Simple, and Mark managed to inquire, though not with a grave countenance, whether he sold ipecacuanha lozenges for headaches?

"No, sir," said the man of many trades; at the same time, to Mark's no little amazement, producing a box with a large title printed on it of "Ipecacuanha Lozenges."

"How's this?" said Mark, "why, you *do* sell them."

"Yes, sir," said the man, "I do, though you

seemed to come expecting I did not: but I do not sell 'em for headaches by any means."

Mark paid the price of the box; and while Mr. Simple was folding it up, which he seemed not to hurry in doing, he continued:—"I shall get another box at L——, for I make it a rule to keep one specimen of every patent medicine. Ask for any thing you please, and you can have it, Mr. Masborough. The stationer at L—— trusts me till I sell; and then I pay for only what I've sold. I'm surprised to see you in these parts, sir; I heard the Squire had left, and the former people were come again in his stead."

Mark said it was true, and he was only a visiter for a day or two.

On their return home, Mark said he hoped he had not given offence by his confession of the motive of his trip to Florence. Matilda assured him he had not; she was only surprised he had taken so long a journey for so small an object. Mark was proceeding to follow the subject, when Matilda begged him to desist, saying, the short-

ness of their acquaintance only allowed of general topics. — Mark replied, " he was conscious he deserved the reproof, but he hoped they would not be always strangers."

Matilda said, " she was sure her father would invite him to repeat his visit; for she had never seen him so *taken* with a stranger before; but," she added, " without wishing to detract at all from Mark's merit, she could not but attribute it in a great measure to the circumstance of his having been on his side of the argument; which argument she proposed they should now further discuss."

Mark took the hint, sensible that he had gone quite as far as a second day's acquaintance would justify towards the object of his wishes. He therefore accepted his fair companion's challenge, and a warm and interesting debate ensued. Perhaps the feeling of being at her ease, to which this turn of subject restored Matilda, was as favourable for Mark as any further urging of his suit could have been. Pleased with each other, and with their walk,

they discovered they had unconsciously arrived at the end of it, and back at the Hall.

They found a little note on the drawing-room table from Mrs. Sileby, saying she had felt so much better that she thought a turn in the air would do her good, so she had walked a little way on the L—— road, intending to squeeze in between Miss Chessalette and Jane if she met them, or if they should overtake her after she turned back. Mark readily guessed the meaning of the absence of his zealous ally. He persuaded Matilda to sing to him whilst he turned over the leaves, and hung enraptured over her beautiful form.

The morning passed only too fleetly. When the ladies returned, both Matilda and Mark were surprised to find the lateness of the hour.

"We met Mrs. Sileby almost a mile on the road, and she made us go round by the Cross Gate to give her an airing for her headache, or else we should have been in an hour sooner."

So said Miss Chessalette: and Miss Jane added:—"Now we must display our commis-

sion: here is the dress, and I hope you will think it will suit Lady Branville. I believe she is of dark complexion?"

The dress was displayed and approved of; and it was announced that Mr. Lacker had painted the arms to a nicety, and boasted that what he prided himself most on was his heraldry.

Mark said he and Miss Matilda had also executed their commission; at the same time producing the box of lozenges.

Mrs. Sileby looked a little surprised, and said, "My head is so much better that I had quite forgotten I ever wanted them. I shall not take any of them."

"Oh, but you must," said Mark; "let me administer a small dose;" and he handed the box.

Matilda said it was too bad that Mrs. Sileby would not reward their exertions by partaking of the fruits of them; and the good lady was fain to swallow one or two of the lozenges, vowing with a wry face, that her head might ache till it split before she would touch another.

Had Mark taken note of time he would have thought the old fellow was drunk, at such a rate did he whirl the minutes along. The half-hour bell sounded, the ladies retired to adorn. But the door had scarcely closed ere it opened again, and re-admitted Mrs. Sileby, anxious to learn how Mark had employed the precious moments she had won for him, and to receive the praises due to her active services. As Mark had availed himself of the latter, he could not refuse to return her the thanks she so visibly expected; and in answer to her inquiries as to the former, he said he trusted he had paved the way for further progress.

Before she could press upon Mark a closer cross-examination, and extract a more detailed confession, the Baronet entered the room. He was full of exultation; his two friends from L—— had shown to his clear conviction a decided majority of votes; and, as he held up his marked list, it was evident that there were more *red cross Knights*, as he called them, than *blackguards*. Mark said he supposed "Red was to be his electioneering colour?"

"To be sure it is," said the Baronet. "Red was my colour nine years ago, when I was returned for L—— by a majority of twelve, after twelve days' polling; so I called these last twelve on the poll my twelve Apostles:—devilish good! wasn't it, my boy?"

"Shocking! for shame, Sir Charles!" exclaimed Mrs. Sileby. "I am surprised that a gentleman of your principles should ridicule and profane the Holy Scripture."

"I stand corrected," said the Baronet. "And as I've confessed my fault—but the bell has rung some time; I must be off and dress for dinner. My two friends dine with me: they are gone to wash their hands. They are certainly in trade, but I hope you'll excuse the liberty I have taken in asking them to sit down with you, Mrs. Sileby. They are very respectable in their way."

Mrs. Sileby said, "By all means: besides, electioneering levelled high and low for the time."

"And you, young gentleman, won't mind it, I dare say?" said Sir Charles, turning to Mark.

votes between them.

Hereupon the two separated.

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AND

THE PROSPEROUS MAN.

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MDCCCXXXV.

THE PICTURE.

CHAPTER I.

Mark was so entirely occupied with the recollection of his morning's walk and his mistress's perfections, that there is no saying what and when would have been the termination of his agreeable reverie, had it not been brought about by the second bell. With all possible bustle he hurried through his half-accomplished toilet, verifying the proverb of "most haste worst speed."

He brushed his hair with his clothes-brush, and made that matter even by using his hair-brush to his trousers; slipped the soap into his watch-pocket, and began rubbing his gold hunter in the immersed palms of his hands, and made

Sands, "I know my own. If you had had it from Mr. Tubbs, you might just as well have put so much soot and saw-dust into the soup at once, and it would have tasted as nauseous for all the world as one of the precious compounds friend Viper there mixes after Dr. Palehorse's prescriptions."

Now Mr. Viper, it must be remarked, was by no means a person to be joked with, even by so facetious a wag as Mr. Sands. Mr. Viper was one of those who have risen in the world, and who therefore feel they have a character and a certain station to support. He had till the age of thirteen or fourteen cleaned knives, blacked shoes, and run on errands; and in order to prevent him making mistakes in the latter capacity, his master, who was a druggist at L——, and who had taken a liking to him, had had him taught to read. Having some natural quickness, he learnt the Latin names of the treasures of the shop; and being very attentive, he won from his master the further reward of being taken apprentice; whence, rom less to more, he had in time succeeded to the

business. On setting up for himself, he also, considering he had a stake in the country, became a politician—a character which he had assumed at least as legitimately as that of druggist, inasmuch as by universal consent and practice it is found that people of every degree, with any sort or no sort of preparation, are able to discuss the most intricate points of Government; whilst it is generally allowed that a certain quantity of education is useful for those who have the dispensing of salts and soda, of prussic and oxalic acid. For his imperfect education Mr. Viper compensated by a display of such scholarship as he possessed, consisting chiefly of very hard words, varied from the common pronunciation, and whose meaning was not always perfectly understood by himself. The dignity of his laboratory was a point on which he was peculiarly sensitive, and the remark of the grocer therefore seemed highly indecorous.

"No insinevations, Mr. Sands, if you please," said he; "have the purliteness not to make alliterations to my profession."

"No offence, neighbour Vi," cried the grocer.

"I 'm sure I 've the greatest respect for both you and the doctor—only I can't say I 'm much of a customer to either; and there 's the rub."

The last words were spoken in a low tone, with his head turned towards Mark and Mrs. Sileby, and a knowing wink. Mark invited Mr. Sands to take a glass of wine.

"By all manner of means, sir, and no mistake," said the gratified grocer; "here 's to you and yours. Pray, sir, is there a Mrs. Masborough that I may drink too? I never forget the ladies."

Mark said he was not so fortunate. "All time enough yet," said Mr. Sands; "why, let me see, I was eight-and-thirty before I married my mistress, and we 've got—let me see—six is it? There 's Stephen Samuel Sempronius Sands—Sarah Sophia Susan Sands—and there we 'd got to the end of the Christian *esses*, before we 'd got to the end of our quiver—so next came Amelia Anne Sands—then Snibbs Snooks Sands—Matthew Mark Sands—Esau Jacob Sands—and our little baby that is yet to be named—what do you say we should call it, now?"

"Why, you are like the sands on the sea-shore!" cried Sir Charles.

All laughed, as expected.

"Capital good that; is'nt it, eh, Vi?" cried Mr. Sands. "The Baronet's a deuced clever fellow, and will do capital well for our representative, won't he?"

"If you dericate your observation to me," said the druggist, drawing himself up, "I must with great frankincense confess that my sentiments are coinciderental and congorous to your own; but why you should abbreviate my name I am at a loss to conjecture, as our intimacy has never been of that magnificence to have allowed your taking that liberty before."

"Why, neighbour," said the good-tempered Mr. Sands, "again I say, I meant no offence: take a glass of wine with me, Vi-per." The glass was taken accordingly, and it, added to the previous ones, and the strong ale which had preceded them, began to have a great effect on Mr. Sands's naturally good spirits. He accordingly had the courage to invite Mrs. Sileby to take

"They must be a *slow* poison," cried Sir Charles, pleased to introduce a pun.

"By Gad, I should like to hear you in the House, Mr. Baronet," exclaimed Sands.

"Give me some of that pudding, Vi—I mean Mr. Viper—to which you've just helped yourself. Bless me! why, you're crying!—I'm sure I didn't mean to hurt your feelings by calling you Vi, or talking of poison.—I'm sure nobody's more careful in their labels than you are; and really I was not thinking of that case the coroner brought in 'accidental death.' What have I done?"

"Nothing," said, or rather sobbed, Mr. Viper, holding his handkerchief to his mouth and eyes. "Nothing. I am sure you meant no harm. Let me have another glass of wine with you. I will help you."

Mr. Viper extended his arm in front of Miss Chessalette, and replenished the glass of Mr. Sands from a black bottle, which the latter supposed to contain some wine not usually put into decanters. They bowed. In a moment the face of Mr. Sands was as red as scarlet, the tears were

in his eyes also, and he roared out—"Oh, my God, I 'm poisoned indeed! I 've swallowed liquid fire!"

"*Quantum suff* of *caloric*, no doubt," exclaimed Mr. Viper, "in the shape of Chili vinegar! It was brought to me by mistake. So I thought you might as well have a benefit too—eh?" and the scion of Æsculapius beheld with delight the laughing face of Mark. He tossed off his own glass of Madeira, smacked his lips, threw himself back in his chair, stretched out his legs, and looked on the contortions of the excruciated grocer with unconcealed pleasure.

Dinner being ended, the ladies were not reluctant to depart. The man of tea and sugar had monopolized the conversation, and they were little pleased with the society of either of the electors. They retired accordingly to the drawing-room, pitying the Baronet and Mark; especially the latter, who had no such motive as the master of the feast had to endure their vulgarity. Mark
lt their departure a relief, for, though it robbed
eyes of their most treasured object, he had

been so uneasy at Matilda's being in company with two wretches, whose presence before her seemed a profanation, that, while he could not help laughing at the absurdities which had occurred at the dinner-table, he was glad for once to see her leave the room.

The Baronet, too, was now heartily tired of his guests, but he had an object to achieve, and a task to go through. He must play the courteous and generous host, and hold fast their hearts with his gracious welcome.

As soon as the ladies were gone, Mr. Sands proposed to drink their health, at the same time congratulating Sir Charles on their beauty, and expressing his hopes that his Sarah Sophia Susan and his Amelia Anne might only grow up like them, and be as pretty, as genteel, and as accomplished. Mark bit his lip, and longed to annihilate the daring grocer for his treason in presuming so to abuse the optative mood.

"By the bye, what are their names?" he continued.

"The one at the top," said Sir Charles, "is

my eldest daughter, Mary; the one between you and Mr. Viper, Matilda; and the one on the other side of the table, my youngest daughter, Jane."

"Mary, Matilda, Jane," cried the grocer. "Good! so it shall be. Mary Matilda Jane Sands is my baby's name! Perhaps you would condescend to stand to it, Mr. Baronet?"

The Baronet said he should be most happy, and the delighted grocer rubbed his hands and cried, "Mrs. Sands will be fine and pleased, I vow!"

"Mr. Viper, give us a toast," cried Sir Charles.

Mr. Viper hemmed, nodded his head to and fro, knit his brow, hemmed, tapped the table, hemmed, stood on his legs, hemmed, and spoke—

"Sir Charles and gentlemen, unwanted, as I am—hem—to the deliverance of public speaking—hem—I rise on this present occasion with a—hem—most profound sense of my inefficacity to do justice to the sentiment of my heart and toast—hem. When we considerately consider the stately state of this mighty empire,

and compare it with what it was in the time of Judæus Cæsar, when our ancestors painted their backs, sides—hem—and indeed the total of the whole of their bodies with painted figures of the sun, and the fixed stars, and the other planets—when we consider this, I say—hem—we see what has been done for us by our Parliament. Therefore—hem—we must see the faramount importance of—hem—choosing fit and proper persons to represent us all in the legislatering assembly. Therefore, I say—hem—we ought to choose a man who will attend to our—hem—interests, and understands what we want;—who will—hem—preserve our laws like those of the Medes and Prussians, and who will see the properiety of not taxing the necessary and useful things of life, as drugs, without which life would be intollerollerable, and groceries—('Hear, hear, hear,' from Mr. Sands)—hem. You 've put me out, Mr. Sands—hem—I was going to say—hem—therefore, if we have a good representative, we ought to keep him as long as we can—say—hem—

for seven years, which is a good reason for septenneral Parlourments; and—"

"If he should be a bad one?" whispered Mark.

"Hush!" said Sir Charles, and Mr. Viper continued:

"If he should be a bad one, you say? why then, I should say—hem—supposing him a bad one—I shall therefore—hem—conclude with proposing, what I am sure you must have all along anticiperated—the health of Sir Charles Chessalette, and success to the Red!"

"Bravo!" cried Mr. Sands, thumping the table with his glass. "Egad, neighbour Vi, you 've the gift of the gab, though. You ought to have been bred a counsellor, and you 'd have fairly out-talked either Lawyer Boggle, or Lawyer Bray, or even Counsellor Copperass. Now, I think on 't, you must either propose or second Sir Charles—that you must."

"I 'm sure I should be most ready and most elevated to do so," said Viper, looking at Sir

Charles, who, however, said he had already applied to Lord Lackland and the Rev. Mr. Swizzle—it being important to show he had the Church in his favour—to do him those kind offices, otherwise he should have been most thankful to have availed himself of the eloquence of a Viper.

Great is the force of habit. It was now the hour when Sir Charles usually, indeed regularly, took his siesta. His head began to incline, and as he ever and anon raised it up with a jerk, and opened his eyes, he apologized to his guests for feeling so overcome with the business of the morning. The constraint he was under, and the exertions he had to make, were much against the grain, and he felt but little at his ease. Pinch after pinch of snuff was called in aid; but all in vain; Morpheus, or as Mr. Viper called the God, Orpheus, was triumphant, and the sound of his horn for the victory was revealed to mortal ears by a snore.

Mark and Mr. Viper, as ill luck would have it, got into an argument. Now Mark had unfortunately been fully impressed with the idea

that Sir Charles was a Whig and a Reformer. The observation about septennial parliaments, which had fallen from Mr. Viper, might have undeceived him, had he not been perfectly certain that that worthy orator was quite guiltless of understanding his own expressions. The Baronet's son, Charles, he had often heard advocating the most ultra-radical doctrines, and this he had considered the youthful version of his father's more mellowed sentiments. Sir Charles was, however, a most inveterate Tory; and it was because he had looked upon Mark's defence of English poets against foreign ones, as a proof that he was on the right side, that he had conceived so great a liking for him. Labouring under this error as to the principles of the Red party at L——, Mark had, on finding that his host had retired in his favour from the duty of entertaining his friends, broached some notion, which, instead of receiving, as he expected, the echo of Mr. Viper and Mr. Sands, was met with denial and attempt at refutation.

This had led them into a warm argument; and

when the loudness of their debate had, with its angry tones, prematurely disturbed the slumbers of Sir Charles, he was petrified to hear the heresies and dangerous and damnable doctrines which his favourite was so earnestly defending. He rubbed his eyes, pinched himself, and finding that it was no dream, but too true and sad a reality, he lost no time in coming to the succour of his party.

"Who do you say is intolerant?" cried the Baronet.

"I am not speaking of any particular person, Sir Charles," said Mark; "but what I am contending for is universal toleration. For, I say, that *faith* is an active power of the mind, but *belief*, or assent, is a passive quality. A man can no more persuade himself into a particular creed upon any subject short of demonstration, unless he allows himself to be acted upon by external influences or betrayed by inward feelings, than he can by taking thought add a cubit to his stature. But if he chooses to give way to these impulses, and to surrender his judgment, making

his 'wish the father to his thought,' instead of being supposed to have a rational opinion on the point before him, he must be acknowledged the victim of delusion, who can only be right through error and by accident. When a man, for the sake of his own convenience and benefit, or for the sake of facilitating thereby the indulgence of vicious propensities, supports a certain code of opinions, he is amenable to society for the faith he holds: but when for no motive of this kind, but from conviction, and especially after investigation, which by the bye is not necessarily a precursor of it, (since a truth may flash intuitively upon a mind well constituted for its reception,) a man holds opinions at variance with those generally received or professed by society, he is not only not a proper object for persecution on that account, but is even entitled to an audience, if he seeks it in a proper tone and spirit, and from a declared wish to disabuse the world of erroneous notions. And it is wise to give him a fair hearing, that he may be either refuted, or, on the other hand, have his suggestions followed, and

his reward of fame assigned. Now, if we only consider the different, the diametrically opposite, opinions, entertained on the same subjects by men of nearly equal talent, we shall perceive how their syllogism is in each case made up. The major premise is still their peculiar prejudice; and to this they refer the particular question before them as the minor; and so they jump to their conclusion with a self-persuasion of argument."

"I suppose, sir," said Sir Charles, "you have a self-persuasion yours is an argument. It's no such thing, but mere declamation, and would lead to the idea that all religions are alike; that our protestant religion is not better than every other; that Catholics, Atheists, Deists, Idolaters, Jews, Turks, Infidels, are not answerable; and—"

"Why, now, I'll tell you," cried Mr. Sands, interrupting Sir Charles, "what this gentleman has been saying whilst you were asleep. Oh, such shocking things, Mr. Baronet! In the first place, he says ghosts is all humbug and stuff, and he believes there will be steam-coaches."

"Oh, monstrous!" cried Sir Charles. "It 's a most radical notion."

"Then, Mr. Baronet," continued Mr. Sands, "he and Mr. Viper have been arguing about Missionaries and Bible Societies."

"Yes, Sir Charles," cried Viper, "and he insniverates that most of the pecuniary produce is detained by the collectors and managers, though it is well known they have caused so many Bibles to be printed, that you cannot pawn them for above eighteen-pence a piece."

"Why, the fact is," said Sir Charles, "I myself am no great advocate for these things; for they tend to diffuse Christianity to such an extent, that the world will be all converted, and so they will hurry on the Millennium, which, though very desirable, I would rather leave to the natural course of events, and to posterity, than have it brought about prematurely in our time. You need not laugh, Mr. Masborough; this is a serious and important subject, and you must excuse my saying that people of more experience and perhaps as much wisdom—"

"My dear Baronet," interrupted Mark, "pray excuse me; I really was led on by argument by Mr. Viper to say several things, which, though they are in truth my sentiments, I know I should have kept to myself. For instance, I have been arguing the possibility of flying, of perpetual motion, and——"

"Say no more; I now fully believe you are not quite right in the upper works, and that is a sufficient excuse for any wild vagaries of fancy——."

"Sir Charles," said Mark, "gas-lighting was laughed at as the vision of an enthusiast; steam-vessels were classed with dragons and griffins; both are now in full effect! Why should not the same happen as to our voyaging in the air, which indeed has been in part, though clumsily, effected by balloons? And as to perpetual motion, the analogies of nature warrant—"

"The analogies of a fiddle-stick, sir!" cried Sir Charles. "I find I have been much deceived in you, and I regret that my son should have introduced such an acquaintance, or rather, now I think of it, sir, that you should have introduced

yourself. A person of your dangerous opinions is one with whom I cannot prolong my acquaintance."

Mark rose—"Sir Charles Chessalette," he said, "I show your years more respect than you show them yourself, in not noticing your words in a more particular manner. Your conduct to your guest is such as, on reflection, I think, you will be ashamed of. I ought, perhaps, to quit your roof instantly;—but I shall content myself with departing early in the morning, for which time my chaise is already ordered. When you come up to the drawing-room, I shall meet you as if this had not happened, but after to-night our acquaintance will naturally terminate." With these words Mark left the room.

On arriving in the drawing-room, he found Mrs. Sileby and the youngest Miss Chessalette very intent on a game at backgammon, while the two elder ones were at the piano. He was advancing to the latter, when Mrs. Sileby called him:

"You are a good young man," said she, "to come to the ladies so soon, and to be the first of

the party; but *that* I expected. You've played the deuce."

"I have," said Mark.

"Nonsense!" cried the lady; "I was speaking to Jane, of course, not to you. What deuce have you to play?"

"I have played it; that's all," said Mark.

Mrs. Sileby looked up from her game, and fixed her eyes inquiringly on Mark's face. She there saw enough to convince her that something had gone wrong, and that there was more in his words than "met the ear." She finished her game quickly with her antagonist, and then cried, "she had no chance with her; she must try her luck with somebody else, or else she should get out of temper;" and finally she called Mark, who had gone to the musical party, to come and have one game with her. Mark made an excuse, that he did not like to dispossess Miss Jane Chessalette of her victorious seat; but that was quickly overruled by the young lady's saying, "it would be a rest to her, for they had been playing so many

games, that she was beginning to mistake the black men for the white.

Mark was obliged, therefore, reluctantly to take her place. He had no wish to leave the piano, neither had he any desire to answer the interrogatories which he knew Mrs. Sileby was preparing for him. In the short interval of his passing from the dining-room to the drawing-room, he had considered in his mind whether he should confide to her the fracas which had occurred, and ask her advice; but he had decided against doing so, partly because he recollected he had, in the heat of the moment, used a sort of hint of a personal nature to the Baronet, and partly because he was confident that Mrs. Sileby would recommend some crooked course of policy which he should feel reluctant to adopt. But from this resolution, deliberately though rapidly formed, he had not been sufficiently firm of purpose to save himself from being seduced by the slight temptation of an equivocal word.

He sat down to his game with about as much

readiness as an ass exhibits when he is led forth from a manger, unwontedly plentiful and just tasted, and finds himself placed between a pair of shafts, with an iron bit put into his mouth to ruminate upon.

Making a virtue of necessity, Mark, as soon as Miss Jane went away, in an under tone gave Mrs. Sileby a hasty sketch of the Baronet's untimely wakening, and the consequences.

"You are a great—what I won't say," whispered the lady. "You 've undone all my handywork."

"I confess I have erred," replied Mark. "But I am not without excuse. I could not dream that Sir Charles would awake at such an inopportune moment; neither, had he been awake when our discussion began, should I have had the slightest suspicion but that our politics nearly coincided, instead of their being diametrically opposite."

"Except game," said Mrs. Sileby, "I believe politics are the cause of more quarrels among

your sex than any thing. A still tongue makes a wise head."

"Well, dear madam, at least I have had a lesson, and will be more cautious for the future—but what do you advise for the present?"

"It is of no avail," said the lady, "to lock the door when the steed is stolen, nor to administer physic when the disease has come to a mortal end. The mischief is done."

"Nay," said Mark, "I cannot quote proverbs with you. But I know, if my error is retrievable, you are the person to tell me how to set about it. The house that is on fire may be burnt down or saved, by despair or by exertion."

"There is something in what you say," said Mrs. Sileby, swallowing the compliment; "and I do think if you were to make a very ample apology, and acknowledge that on reflecting on his words you were convinced the Baronet was quite right, and you quite wrong; and that you are become through his arguments a proselyte to Tory senti-

ments, and perceive how Radicalism is only fit for 'a low and degraded crew,' and that Mr. Viper——"

"Stop, my dear Mrs. Sileby," cried Mark, "the advice you give is very excellent, were it practicable. I could as soon cut off my right hand as apologize to any soul breathing. Let me be ever so convinced of my having behaved wrong (as here is by no means the case), I never will retract. I will take all consequences."

"Why do you ask me to advise you?" said Mrs. Sileby, putting one hand on Mark's arm, and the finger of the other to her mouth, to hint to him to moderate the tone of his voice. "What is the use of my counsel if you are so to reject it? What is the use of prescribing for a patient who says he will take no remedy?"

"I do not refuse all remedies—only this one," said Mark.

"It is the only effectual one, I am quite persuaded," cried Mrs. Sileby. "You talk about cutting off right hands, which is mere nonsense:

the rapid spread of the sweet
pose you are angry with h
conquer—triumph over him
prize. Nay, don't interrup
you *theoretical* logicians nic
teaches *us:* you were going
not angry; then, why contin
why part in anger from the
why——"

"You know, Mrs. Sileby,
in our controul. I admit the
advice; I admit it is what
friend; but it is against my o
it. Oh, how much harder it
to preach!"

"You 're an obstinate silly
Mrs. Sileby, "and I should

success in this quarter than you deserve. Let me make your apologies ;—appoint me your plenipotentiary."

"No: I would as soon apologize at once, myself," said Mark.

"Well, then, you shall not appoint me; and I will manage it all out of my own head, without compromising your High Mightiness, without your knowing it,—you understand?"

"No; not even so. I will not even connive."

"Ay, you shall not connive:—I will do it nevertheless."

"No; you must not. I positively forbid you."

"Right.—You positively forbid me. You even make me promise you most faithfully not to do so. I give you that promise; but I break it, and negotiate an honourable peace. I give you your beautiful Matilda."

"Tempter!" cried Mark, unable to avoid a smile at this new specimen of the lady's diplomatic honesty, and yet wishing to preserve a serious look, lest he should seem to give way: "Mind, I do not consent. I beg of you, in

my own ally. I would gladly
you recommend, were it possib
you it is not."

"You know," said Mrs. Sile
mised not to commit you: s
ment. Go to the girls,—say
Send Jane back, and make t
precious time with Matilda."

Mark did as he was bid:
would have the last word; an
he said she had beaten him,
double sense;" and mentally re
ing that she had beaten him
he knew that he was understoo
their game.

When Mrs. Sileby had playe
Jane, she professed herself tired

time talked to Matilda. She happened to wear a beautiful cameo ring bearing the device of Cupid kicking a foot-ball, in the shape of a heart, with the motto, "Who 'll play with me?" Mark said he was "an admirer of cameos;" but, in truth, he was a greater admirer of soft snowy hands and taper fingers. He begged he might be allowed to look at the ring, and Matilda was going to draw it off for the purpose of showing it. He, however, took the liberty of not perceiving her intention, but of actually impeding it, by taking the hand into his own and holding it whilst he leaned over it, and admired the beauty of the device and the exquisite delicacy of the workmanship.

His hand trembled as it lightly pressed its fair prisoner; and he said, speaking doubtless of the ring, "it was the most beautiful he had ever beheld—it was matchless, it was perfect symmetry and loveliness."

"Well, now," said Mrs. Sileby, instead of answering a remark addressed to her by Miss Chessalette, "I have heard of *rings* being beau-

tiful and even lovely, but I never heard of one being *symmetrical* before—what an odd expression!"

Neither Mark nor Matilda took any notice of this observation, and it might have been doubted whether they had heard it, if Matilda's cheek had not echoed it to the eye, and Mark had not let go her hand.

CHAPTER II.

When the Baronet arrived in the drawing-room with his two political friends, he and Mark mutually felt the embarrassing nature of their position, and Mark began to regret that he had not at once left the house. He mentally taxed himself with having yielded to the temptation of passing one more evening in the company of Matilda.

Mrs. Sileby said she wanted to have a few words with Sir Charles, and accordingly they retired to a distant part of the drawing-room together.

Mr. Viper and Mr. Sands, who had been vanquishing Mark in his absence, now found themselves but ill at ease. The young ladies

had been but too little pleased with their behaviour at dinner to make overtures for engaging them in conversation; and Mark eyed them both with a look of mixed contempt and pity, giving perhaps rather a greater portion of the more angry feeling to the presumptuous and coxcomical druggist; and rather a greater one of the latter feeling to the dispenser of almonds and raisins. Mr. Viper rubbed his chin, pulled up his gloves, and "wondered whether it was a fine night?" Nobody noticed his observation till Mr. Sands, who had been employed in putting his hands into his pockets and taking them out, not knowing what else to do with them, and who would have almost consented to instant amputation and to abide by the loss for the time to come, if he might only have been relieved from the incumbrance of them for the present, at length said, "he wondered too!"

They stood before the fire, to which the impulse of habit had led them, though they were fevered with a more than usual portion of port, and there enacted the part of screens to the

young ladies, who had left the piano, and were seated at a table.

There was a long silence, and Mark had a malicious triumph in watching the pair of roasting Tories. "I do wonder if it is a fine night?" again said Mr. Viper. "So do I, I'm sure!" replied Mr. Sands.

Matilda whispered to Mark to go and talk to her papa's visiters. Mark asked her if she did not hear they were talking to each other.

Again there was a silence, and the only thing heard was the loud whispering of Sir Charles and Mrs. Sileby, who it was evident were warmly engaged. Mark could overhear the words—"I tell you, ma'am, he is a radical, and a republican—he is an atheist and a deist?"

"But he'll have a fine property."

"He has many bad properties. Do you think, ma'am, I'd have for a son-in-law one base enough to take advantage of my sleep, and say that what I had vouched to be true as to spirits and apparitions was all a lie? Do you think—" but the rest of the

sentence was lost upon Mark. Matilda told him to invite Mr. Viper to take a chair.

"Will you not be seated, gentlemen?" said Mark.

"Thank you, sir," said Mr. Sands, looking all gratitude and forgiveness, and taking a chair. Mr. Viper sat down too.

"If you knew what had happened," whispered Mark to Matilda, "you would not have given me the order you did."

"Has any thing happened?" inquired the young lady.

"You said this morning," replied Mark, "your father would be sure to invite me to visit him again. What would you say if I were to tell you he had actually given me a strong notice to quit this very evening?"

"I should say it could not be true."

"But it is quite true; and I believe I ought not to be here now."

"If it were true, I should then say I was sorry."

"Thank you, oh, thank you," said Mark; "for, it is but too true, and I am sorry to say, the Baronet has altered his favourable opinion of me, and I am now at a sad discount. I regret it, especially for the consequences."

"But how did this happen?" inquired Matilda.

"It would take me too long to tell you now," replied Mark; "If you are curious to hear the circumstances, Mrs. Sileby can tell you. I trust you will make allowances for me, should you hear me blamed by your father when I am gone."

Mrs. Sileby now came to the table, and said Sir Charles would not let her off playing a rubber as his partner, against Mr. Viper and Mr. Sands. She contrived to whisper in Mark's ear that she was unable to effect any good, unless he would himself personally and amply apologize. To which he replied aloud, "He should not dream of doing any thing of the kind."

The four being seated at their game, Mark and the young ladies amused themselves with looking over a collection of prints. As soon as the rubber

was over, Sir Charles taking his candle, and bowing formally to Mark, led off his two new friends to their rooms. Mrs. Sileby said, Sir Charles had told her to desire his daughters not to sit up; and accordingly they also left the drawing-room.

As soon as she was once more alone with Mark, Mrs. Sileby told him, "he had certainly done for himself in the estimation of Matilda's father. She had never seen any one more bitter against another than he was; she thought the only things that could possibly appease him were length of time, and largeness of concession: and she confessed, after her conference with him, that the latter would require to be more ample than Mark in his present state of feeling, she supposed, would be ready to make."

She then gave him some instructions as to his taking care of her husband on their journey to London; and promised to send him a packet of letters by her maid in the morning, for him to convey to him and to her sons and daughter.

When she had retired to her own apartment to

write them, and Mark found himself left alone in that room where he had first beheld the picture and Matilda herself, and where so many interesting events had occurred to him, he spent a short time before the shrine of his adoration, tracing the features, and engraving them, as it were, more firmly on the tablet of his heart. The transit from the girl into the woman had wrought less change than usual, for the features remained the same, and they had been exactly copied at first; and the expression of innocence and joyousness, which was on the picture, was still preserved in the original. Ah! how seldom is it so! How seldom does the fresh dewy bloom endure beyond the very earliest youth! But the withering and glaring beams of the gay world, the blighting dust of fashion, had not profaned the sweet flower. Matilda had known little of care, and nothing of corruption. Her soul was unconscious of an evil wish, her heart untainted by any passion. The very first breath of the awakening breeze, the first ripple on the smooth surface of her unruffled feelings, was the flutter of the

wing of the young god, who, at the approach of Mark, had begun to hover over her.

Mark at length retired to his room, and was not long ere the Baronet and he met on friendly terms in the fairy region of dream-land; and the bond of reconciliation was the hand he had been so much admiring, the hand of his beautiful Matilda!

Suddenly he started from his sleep with an exclamation of surprise. A hand, which held his, was hastily withdrawn; and as he sat up in his bed, half-awake, he saw a figure wrapped up in a cloak, with a black mask on, hastily leave the room. The moonbeams did not fall upon his bed-room window, but the light of the night was still generally, though faintly, diffused over the apartment.

Recovering his surprise, and rousing himself, he rushed to the door: nobody was to be seen. In the long gallery where the moon shone bright and full, he could see that there was no one, and he was convinced his visiter, whoever it was, must have gone in the opposite direction, along a

short passage, and down the staircase. He was in his night-dress, and he was conscious it would be useless to follow, even were he better equipped for pursuit. He returned, therefore, to his room, meditating on the strangeness of the occurrence. He felt for his purse, and found that it was quite safe. His portmanteau, as far as he could judge by that light, appeared also to be undisturbed. But what convinced him more than any thing that plunder had not been the object of his visitant, was the circumstance that he had been awakened by having his hand squeezed. In another moment he perceived there was a ring placed on the little finger of his right hand, where he had chiefly felt the pressure; and although he frequently wore one, it was never on that hand, and therefore he could not have got into bed with it on by mistake. Besides, the shape of the ring, and the simultaneous beat of his heart, told him it was Matilda's cameo. He went close to the window, and perceived that he was right!

If the apparition had occasioned surprise in the

first instance, now it was more than doubled. He could not believe it was Matilda herself who had paid him this nocturnal visit. Her retiring manner and her great delicacy forbade him to suppose so. Could it be Mrs. Sileby, or her maid? It was a female, he was sure, though the proportions of the figure were wholly hid by the cloak and the darkness. Could it be Mary, or Jane Chessalette? The latter was lively and likely to play off a practical joke, and might have either come with the consent of Matilda, or have stolen her ring, and made a present of it without her knowledge: but, then, she had scarcely observed his attachment to her sister, which alone could have suggested the idea. The cloak he thought was one of the old family relics, which, consisting of antiquated court-dresses and other curious specimens of the finery of the earlier Chessalettes, were kept in a room formed out of a wider part of the smaller gallery on the drawing-room floor, and known by the name of *The Tapestry*. There, too, lay many of the old fancy dresses, which had done duty at the balls and

masquerades, of which Lady Chessalette had, in her lifetime, been so fond. Masks, too, were a part of the treasures there stored; and Mark had no doubt his visiter, be she who she might, had been thence equipped. He watched for some time in half-expectation that the figure would return, but at last gave up all hopes of that. He then renewed his speculations and his conjectures, and, amidst them all, he fell asleep, with the cameo on his finger.

He was awakened by a footman coming to brush his clothes, at a little before eight: but he did not rise immediately, and the consequence was he fell asleep again.

He was again awakened by a knock at the door. It was Mrs. Sileby's maid, who brought him a packet, and said her mistress wished to speak to him; she would see him in her room. Mark rose and dressed himself with all expedition, and then hastened to Mrs. Sileby's apartment. She told her maid to wait in the dressing-room; and, apologizing to Mark for receiving him *à la*

Française, begged him to take a seat by her bed-side, and then addressed him:

"My dear young friend, I shall not now revert to my son's unfortunate situation. I yesterday told you every thing on that subject in our conference in the garden. There is a letter for him in the packet, as well as letters to Edward, Rosa, and my husband. You will see Rosa, of course? But you and she are now nothing to one another. She is a wife, and I hope, notwithstanding what took place between Sir Charles and you, you will soon be a husband. It is highly desirable—it would heal the breach between the families—and I should be heartily glad to be of any service in bringing about so happy an event. It was on this point that I wished to speak to you. I followed dear Matilda to her room last night, and extracted from her what I should not be justified in repeating to you, were I not well assured of your sentiments towards her."

"Nay, dear madam," interrupted Mark, "you shall not tell me any thing without her leave."

"What silly fellows you clever young men are! Why, I was pleading your cause, and whatever she said to me she of course said, as it were, to you. I praised you in terms I will not repeat before your face; above all, I expatiated on your previous conquests—nay, now, you need not shake your head as disclaiming what you know well enough. You know my Rosa preferred you to a lord, and Marianne Lumley to her engaged swain, as well as to my poor Sebastian. I should not confess the last fact, of course, were you likely to stand as his rival. Poor fellow! he cannot be a rival till—but let that pass. Well, I told her these things because nothing so soon wins a woman as the reputation of previous successes: it is a testimonial of merit, it shows that others will confirm their own opinion. But I must not go into metaphysics. So, having given you the best of characters, (and I do think you deserve a good one,) I told her I had left you in the drawing-room very unhappy, and fearful that you had lost your prize; and I said you had commissioned me to beg

for a pledge of hope, and a token of parting in friendship, and that it was to be the cameo ring you had so admired on her hand."

"Good God! how could you do so? How could you dare to do such a thing?" exclaimed Mark.

"Look at the result," said Mrs. Sileby, taking his hand and holding up the finger, where the ring was. "How this came here, you have to tell me: how it came to come there, I have told you."

"I need not tell you," said Mark, laughing, "what you know as well, if not better than I do. Do you think I didn't know you, in spite of your disguise? I knew it was you well enough!"

"Who was I? What do you mean? I don't understand you—"

"Oh, but you do," said Mark.

"I certainly do understand you to insinuate that it was owing to me that you got that ring. So it may be, in one sense. For, I do assure you, I begged and prayed of Matilda to give it me for

you. But she positively and decidedly refused. Whether she afterwards brought it you herself, or sent it to you, is what I have to learn from you."

"Are you serious, Mrs. Sileby, in saying it was not you, who came into my room last night, fled on my waking, and left this ring on my finger?"

"I, indeed! I did nothing of the sort," said Mrs. Sileby. "I am an old woman. What should I come into your room for? You and I are of likely ages to fall in love with one another! But, tell me, is that really the way you came possessed of the ring?"

"It is," replied Mark, "and you must forgive me for being incredulous that this is news to you. I cannot believe that Miss Matilda Chessalette brought it."

"Tell me as much as you can," said Mrs. Sileby. Mark related the story of his waking, his surprise, his going to the gallery, and his giving up the pursuit.

"You do indeed astonish me, Mr. Masborough!" said Mrs. Sileby. "I said a great deal to Matilda about the ring, and I asked her to

connive at my taking it to you. I said if she refused it to your urgent but respectful entreaties—"

"I made no entreaty," said Mark.

"I know that—I made it for you! Well," continued the lady, "and I said if she refused it, the inference you would draw would be that she meant to adopt her father's quarrel with you; and, in fact, that you would look upon her refusing to send it as equivalent to a notice to retire. She said, that would be unreasonable. I replied, you felt desperate, were in love, distracted. Once she almost consented, I thought; and I fancied she would have been glad for you to have the token without her having to send it. But still she refused. However, I suppose, at last she was so moved by what I had urged, that though she would not make me or any one her confidante, she was determined to save you from despair, and therefore undertook the adventure herself."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Mark.

"Not so," replied Mrs. Sileby. "Who else could it be? It was not I, though you have sus-

pected me, I give you seriously my solemn word of honour. Neither can I believe Matilda would be willing to trust either of her sisters, or her maid. It must, then, have been herself! She disguised herself, I conjecture, in order that you might suppose it was sent, not brought; and, yet by bringing it, she was sure it arrived safely, and that no one else, except the person to whom it was to convey a meaning, knew that he had it, not even I the adviser, the bearer of the petition for it."

"The forger of the petition!" said Mark; "but still, Mrs. Sileby, I cannot believe it was Matilda, I cannot think she would condescend so much."

"She will condescend more some day, I dare say. I shall contrive for you to meet her at my house, now that I see that she has followed my advice about the ring, though, of course, I shall not seem to know she has done so till she tells me—provided always, Sir Charles does not demand a promise from me to the contrary. But I must bid you adieu for the present. Our interview has been of much greater duration than I

reach Sileby after my husband
Remember me to Rosa and Ed
you will do the best you can
Give his father a hint not to re
sure he must suffer enough. A

"Adieu, dear madam," said
of doubts and fears. But on S
I am strong in hope. Adieu!
the young ladies; I shall be
appear."

So saying, Mark left Mrs. S
to his own room, sent his portm
to the chaise, which was w
descended slowly after it.

As he drove away from the
heart and a mind full of anxi

agreeably surprised. Upon the leads was a figure which he knew to be Matilda's. He kissed his hand: she returned the salutation; and at the same instant the road turned round some buildings and she was lost to his sight.

He had been very slow to believe that it was she herself who had brought him the ring; nor could all Mrs. Sileby's disclaimers and arguments do more than make him doubtful. But now that he had seen her on the leads, he could not but believe she had stationed herself there to watch his departure, and, from a spot where she could not be observed by any of the family, strive to catch his eye, and make such signal of adieu as the time should allow of, and the message, which Mrs. Sileby had delivered as from him, seemed to require.

He was not long in reaching L——, where, whilst his breakfast was being prepared, he took a walk as far as the house of Mr. Cheatham. From that gentleman he learnt that his uncle had secluded himself for some weeks, in fact ever since he lost his law-suit, at Cromer, a small and

retired watering-place on the Norfolk coast, and, he added, he had no doubt he would there be expecting him.

Mark told Mr. Cheatham he should not be able to see his uncle just yet, as he was obliged to go abroad without loss of time; and he said, that as that was the case, it would be quite unnecessary for Mr. Cheatham to mention his having seen him at L——.

"This is very unlucky, sir," said Mr. Cheatham; "I have been young myself in my day, and I know what being on the sly means. But the fact is, your uncle is informed of your being at Rotherington just about this very moment as near as may be."

"How the deuce can that be?" inquired Mark, not a little surprised. "Pray, sir, did you know of my being there?"

"I did not," replied the lawyer, "till I was told by the same person that told him, or is about telling him. It was no other than his man Giles."

"Indeed! Giles?" exclaimed Mark.

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Cheatham. "Mr. Masborough sent him here with sundry important documents, which he was unwilling to trust by the cross-country coaches, two days ago, and he went away only yesterday morning by the L—— Roaring Lion. You must know, sir, your uncle is going to carry the Rotherington case into the court above, and to try to upset the verdict of the court below: and as he is dissatisfied with my London agents, which I am much surprised at, as I have done business with that house these sixteen years, and my poor father, (who is in heaven,) Judas Cheatham, did business with them years and years before that, and I must say, though it is impossible to win every cause, I have known few so successful. Certainly, they ought to have retained Froth and Lyall, and they did let those two be on the wrong side, but—"

"But—excuse me," interrupted Mark, "though this subject is very interesting to me, my time is not my own, and is so precious that I cannot now stop. Can you tell how Giles knew of my being in this neighbourhood?"

"He learnt it at the inn. They told him they had sent you in a chaise and pair on to Rotherington Hall to Sir Charles's."

"Oh, I see," said Mark. "The fact is, sir, I am only in England for a day or two, and I came here to see my uncle, as I thought, not knowing Rotherington was in other hands. I am compelled to be off in another direction, or I would at once go to Cromer and see him."

"Shall I say any thing on the subject to Mr. Masborough the next time I write to him?" inquired Mr. Cheatham.

"No, thank you," said Mark; "I shall have an opportunity of writing, myself, in the course of the day, I doubt not, now that I know his address."

"I am sorry you are in such a hurry, sir," said Mr. Cheatham, bowing, "as I wished very much to consult you on the propriety of recommending to your uncle, since he is quite determined not to employ my old agents any more, the great house of Vice, Screw, File, and Pincer, of Chancery Lane, who—"

"Indeed, I know nothing about them. You are a much better judge than I am of such matters," said Mark.

Mr. Cheatham again bowed, and continued: "you are very kind, sir, to say so;—very kind, sir,—very kind indeed. But at all events, sir, I should hope that house would meet *your* approbation."

"I am sure I know nothing against them," said Mark; "but you know I have nothing to do with the business, and am only interested for my uncle's success."

Mr. Cheatham smiled: "You are indeed interested in his success. It will make some thousands difference to you some day, whether he has had to pay costs or not. And *I* am interested, too; for, I hope, in the event of his recovering Rotherington and your settling there, sir, after him, that I may hope for a continuance of favours, sir;—and, sir,—we must look to the rising sun, you know."

A smile of contempt curled the lip and nose of Mark at Mr. Cheatham's quoting the text which

was the rule and guide of his conduct. However, the man was civil, and, as Mark recollected, only following his view of self-interest in a somewhat transparent and inartificial manner. He therefore civilly wished him good morning, and returned to the inn.

Having finished his breakfast, he proceeded to Sileby Hill. He found Mr. Sileby in a low nervous state, but cheered a little by his arrival, and visibly pleased with his announcement that Mrs. Sileby had invited him to be his companion to London, and that he was come to offer himself for that purpose.

Mr. Sileby said he was ready to set off if Mark was; and though the latter had designed to have written to his uncle, whilst his companion was finishing his preparations for his journey, he readily assented to an immediate departure; for he knew they would have to sleep upon the road, and that therefore he should have plenty of time for writing at whatever inn they might pass the night.

They set off accordingly. Mark did all he

could to cheer the anxious and desponding father, upon whose appearance the hand of sorrow had told with a most visible effect. He partly succeeded; and they were enabled to go a stage farther than they had proposed. They stopped at a small market-town about seventy miles from London, where they found a comfortable inn bearing the sign of the Rhinoceros and Spider.

As Mark had anticipated, Mr. Sileby was much fatigued, and retired to bed early. He then took the opportunity of writing to Cromer, explaining to the Squire the mistake he had made in going to Rotherington; the late hour at which he had received true intelligence of his address, and the impossibility of his then coming to him on account of his engagement with Mrs. Sileby, and the necessity of his returning to Italy as soon as he had escorted his infirm charge to London. He begged his uncle to write to him at Florence, and expressed his sorrow and surprise at not having heard from him, and also his regret at the annoyance he had met with in losing his law-suit.

Of course he did not tell him of his discovery of the picture being a portrait; still less of the terms he stood on towards the original.

Having finished his letter, he walked out into the town as far as the post-office and then went to bed.

In the morning they left the Rhinoceros and Spider, and, proceeding on their journey, arrived in London late in the evening without meeting with any adventure.

Under other circumstances Mr. Sileby would naturally have gone at once to Lord Branville's house, but he could not take up his quarters under the roof of his son-in-law at the time when he was the prosecutor of his son. They therefore drove to Fladong's; and as soon as they had established themselves there, Mark without loss of time set out for Lord Branville's to apprise him and Lady Branville of the arrival of her father.

On inquiring for Lord and Lady Branville, Mark was informed that his Lordship was gone out to dine with Colonel O'Tatoe, but Lady

Branville was at home. He sent up his card, and, the servant returning, desired him to walk up into the drawing-room.

There he found Lady Branville, excessively pale, and evidently much agitated. She rose to meet him, took his hand, pressed it, burst into tears, and threw herself back on the sofa.

Mark felt very uncomfortable; for he hardly knew whether to attribute what he beheld to her brother's unfortunate situation, or to the unexpected sight of himself; since, after all Mrs. Sileby had told him, he could not doubt that he had stood high in the favour of her daughter.

"I thought you were in Italy far away," exclaimed Lady Branville, removing the handkerchief from her eyes for a moment whilst she fixed them on him, and then quickly returning it—"and Charles Chessalette told us you had been wounded in a duel."

"I dare say my appearance here at all," said Mark, "is then a great surprise to you, and especially at this unseasonable hour of the

is, I have a message—"

"What!—from whom?"

"Nay, calm yourself, dear Lady

"No, no, no!" cried Lady B
me Rosa—my happy name, my o
name of my youth, of my home
had when I first knew *you*."

"But Lady—"

"Rosa, Rosa!" vehemently e
Branville.

"Rosa, then," said Mark, tak
and speaking in the most soothing
you allow me the privilege of calli
name of former friendship—de
must try to exert yourself, and
for some news I have for you; n
please you."

now, nor ever since I was sold for a title, and entered this scene of magnificent misery."

Mark felt for the poor victim of ambition. He had been aware that she and Lord Branville lived unhappily together. Mrs. Sileby had told him that; but he little expected to receive from herself so plain a confession of what people usually make a point of endeavouring to conceal.

Lady Branville proceeded: "And yet I ought not to say so. It is pleasure to see *you*, and one which I little looked for at present. Come, now I am better. See how I can triumph over my weakness. There, now, do I not look like a heroine, able to receive any tidings? Besides, you said it was good news—or else I should have been afraid my father or mother were poorly."

"My news is about them," said Mark. "I have a letter from your mother—and—"

"Have you seen her, then?" inquired Lady Branville.

"I have," replied Mark, "and I have seen your father still more lately."

"When, where?—how so? Are they not together?"

"No," said Mark; "but you are losing your self-possession again."

Lady Branville drew a deep sigh; then wiped her eyes, and putting on a smile, said:—"You were right;—I am grown sadly nervous, especially since this affair of poor Sebastian's, of which you have heard of course?"

"Yes, I have," said Mark, "and it is about that that we have come to town."

"We!—Who then is with you?" inquired Lady Branville.

"Do not be surprised when I tell you," said Mark, again taking her hand, and seating himself beside her, and then after a pause, he added, "I have escorted your father to London."

"My father!" exclaimed Lady Branville. "Oh, I am so glad! But where is he? Why did he not come here? Ah, I forgot—he

could not come to our house; we are prosecuting his eldest son."

"I must remind you to be calm," said Mark. "Your Ladyship knows—"

"Rosa!" cried Lady Branville.

"Yes, Rosa! But what would my Lord think if he heard me addressing you so familiarly? You know I was never much of a favourite with him."

"Because," answered Lady Branville, smiling, "he knew you were a favourite with some one else. But those things are all past now.—Heigho! Well; you shall style me Lady Branville before him, but Rosa when we are alone."

"I shall not see you much either alone or in his presence," replied Mark. "I am off for Italy again the day after to-morrow."

"I shall try to persuade you to stay," said Lady Branville. "You need not shake your head as if to say you will not. You shall not have a passport until you have proved to me some absolute necessity for going. But, my father,—where is he?"

"At Fladong's, sitting up to see you."

"I will go with you at once," said Lady Branville.

"My *Lord* will not be at home till very late, I should think, for he is going to dine or to sup, or perhaps I ought rather to say to breakfast, with an Irish colonel. You may read his note, which I consider a curiosity, whilst I put my bonnet on; but first I must ring for my carriage."

Her Ladyship rang the bell, and ordered her carriage, and then told Mark, "Lord Branville was gone to one or two of his clubs to while away the time till his dinner, which she really was puzzled whether to call early or late, but she supposed, as the Colonel was a senator, he liked to have done his duty to his constituents before he did his duty to his constitution. She handed Mark the Colonel's note of invitation, and left him reading it. It was as follows:—

"Col. O'Tatoe presents his unfeigned compliments to Lord Branville, and begs the favour of the honour of the pleasure of his Lordship's com-

pany to dinner on Friday next at a quarter past twelve on Saturday morning.

"Shamrock Villa, Regent's Park.
"Wednesday Evening."

Mark was a good deal amused by this specimen of the Hibernian polite letter-writer; and half suspected that he could add another reason to the one Lady Branville had given, viz., that the worthy inviter, springing from the gem of the sea, had had probably certain scruples about regaling himself on the day of invitation on beef and mutton, and had therefore used a little pious fraud in delaying it past the hour that should divide it from the next.

In a few minutes Lady Branville returned; the carriage was at the door, and they drove off to Fladong's.

The meeting between Mr. Sileby and his daughter was very affecting. The old gentleman had never taken such active steps as his wife had done towards bringing about that marriage which had turned out so unhappily. As he stood at the window facing Oxford-street, and saw the pale

face of his daughter, as she stepped out of her coroneted carriage, he felt a weight at his heart. In a minute more his daughter was in his arms.

She inquired after her mother, for she said she had only had time to take a hasty glance at her letter. Mr. Sileby, in turn, inquired of her after his sons. Edward, she said, was gone to the Temple, to consult with the lawyers engaged for Sebastian's defence, while Sebastian had given way to despair and the certainty that he should be found guilty.

Mark, who had remained below during the first meeting of the father and daughter, now entered the room, and the three discussed what was best to be done. Lady Branville was decidedly of opinion that nothing would dissuade her husband from continuing the course he was pursuing, even had it been a matter for his option, which it no longer was, as on the committal of the accused, he had been bound over to prosecute, as had Mr. Smith been to give evidence. It was arranged that Mark should call early in the morning on Lady Bran-

ville, and see Edward, and wait to see Lord Branville as soon as he should be up, which would probably not be very early, after his late banquet with Colonel O'Tatoe. After his interview with his Lordship, it was agreed they should return to Fladong's, and proceed to visit Sebastian in prison. They hoped they should be able to induce Lord Branville to call on Mr. Sileby.

These matters being decided on, Lady Branville returned home, escorted by Mark. By the time he got back to his hotel, it was near one o'clock in the morning, and he found Mr. Sileby had retired.

CHAPTER III.

The next morning Mr. Sileby was down before Mark, and appeared much refreshed after his journey by his night's rest. As they sat at breakfast, a letter was delivered to Mark, which the waiter said was brought by Lady Branville's footman, and which required no answer. Mark opened the letter, and was surprised to find it enclosed another. There was a little note from Lady Branville to the following effect:

"My dear Mr. Masborough,—The post has just brought me a few lines from my mother, to say the accompanying letter for you reached Rotherington the day after you left; she says she supposed from the crest it must be from your uncle, and therefore lost no time in forwarding it,

especially as you are staying in town so short a time. I, too, lose no time in sending it, though hoping to see you in an hour or two. Lord Branville, I hear, came home at six this morning.

"Ever your

"Rosa."

His uncle's handwriting had always been a welcome sight to Mark, but it was not so now; for he could not but know that he must have written as soon as Giles had reported his being at Rotherington, and before the letter had reached him, which he had despatched on his journey, the evening of his stopping with Mr. Sileby at the Rhinoceros and Spider, explaining the circumstances which had taken him to Rotherington. He knew the Squire was hasty in judging, and he felt himself reminded of the packet he had once received, sent by him to Sileby, containing his father's angry letter, and his own good-natured one.

Mark had been reading the paper to Mr. Sileby, and he now handed it to him, begging he would give him leave to read a letter from his uncle.

It was as follows:

"DEAR MARK,

"You see I do not begin my letter as your father once did his, although I cannot but think I have more cause of complaint than he had. Your visiting the Chessalettes at all, considering Sir Charles's conduct towards me, is a great blow to me; but to think you should have gone to them *first*, has hurt me more than I can express. '*Non mihi si linguæ centum sint oraque centum Ferrea vox*,' could I tell you all I feel. If any one had said to me, hermitizing in this lonely spot, where defeated, cheated, robbed, I go musing and—

ἀκέων παρὰ θῖνα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης,

that you were in England, visiting the successful party, I should have made answer, 'You must be mistaken. He would come to his old uncle before anybody, especially in the hour of trouble. He cannot be in England; I will not believe it—'*credat Judæus Apella!*' I am sure I should have said so.

"But I will not say all I could, nor speak harshly, were it only for the sake of acting, as I hope God will always give me strength and grace to do, diametrically opposite to your brute of

father. Nay, more—I will not entirely crush the hopes I have raised—I will still leave you independent. You shall have the '*res non parta labore sed relicta:*' but if I find another on whom to bestow an old man's friendship, if the aged tree will bear transplanting, I shall take care not to make it an empty boon.

"I have been so disappointed in you, that I had rather not see you on the altered terms on which only I could now receive you.

"I know human nature—but I thought you an exception. I dare say you imagined I should never find out that you did not come to me first; and further, I dare say, you would really have come to me with pleasure ere long. I do not accuse you of an intention to slight or affront me, nor for any offence in the active mood, or of commission; only in the passive, or of omission.

"I still think well of you; but not *so well*. I still have a regard for you, but I am sadly, sorely disappointed.

"With continued wishes for your success in life,

"I am your affectionate uncle,

"J. M."

"P. S. I fully intended to have put you up as Whig candidate whenever there might happen to be an election at L——, and, if your new friendship is not stronger than your old one, I would still gladly do so, having a good opinion of your political abilities, and not wishing for our private misunderstanding to sacrifice public principle, and at the same time withdraw my hostility to Sir Charles Chessalette."

Hurt beyond measure at the tenour of his uncle's letter, Mark, although he hoped that his subsequent one written at the Rhinoceros and Spider would have set him right in his eyes, lost no time in sitting down and sending him another, detailing more fully all the circumstances of his hasty descent upon England, his inability to learn his uncle's address, his surprise at finding the Chessalettes at Rotherington, his engagement to escort Mr. Sileby to town, his anxiety to explain all these things as shown by his having written on his journey, the shortness of his stay in London, and the multiplicity of business before him. He mentioned that he was to see Lord

and Lady Branville, Edward and Sebastian, and also that he had to call on the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to learn whether he might expect any assistance for his other friend in prison: and all this was to be done that very day, as it was absolutely necessary for him to be off on the next, and then to use all speed in reaching Florence with his two witnesses. He added, he should lose not a moment in returning to England, and he hoped his uncle would allow him to come and see him, and make any farther explanation he might require. Finally, he begged to have a letter at Fladong's to meet him on his return instead of at Florence, as he should be leaving that city almost before one could get there; and he hoped his uncle would tell him whether he should find him still at Cromer, or where he might be gone to.

As soon as he had finished this letter, pursuant to the agreement come to the night before, he set off for Lord Branville's.

He found Lady Branville and Edward expecting his arrival. It was some time since he and the

latter had met, and the joy of both at seeing one another was most sincere.

Lady Branville sent a message to Lord Branville to say that Mr. Masborough had called to speak with him on business, and was desirous to know at what hour he could see him. His Lordship sent word back that he was just going to rise, and he should be happy to meet Mr. Masborough in the library in three quarters of an hour.

Lady Branville then said that as their deliberation would be of course very much guided by Lord Branville's reception of Mark, and his answer as to his having an interview with Mr. Sileby, she would defer any further discussion of Sebastian's case till after that had taken place, and in the mean time leave Edward and Mark together, who doubtless must have much to talk over.

As soon as they were alone, Edward said "he had no doubt Mark must be surprised at his remaining under Lord Branville's roof after his oppressive and unjust treatment of his brother:

but the fact was, he did it principally on his sister's account, as also with the desire of avoiding a total family rupture. Besides, it had the good effect of entirely excluding Mr. Smith, who was become more than ever odious to Lady Branville. But," added Edward, "I understand you are going away to-morrow for Italy, and, if that is the case, I must take this opportunity, which may be the only one, of talking to you a little on your own affairs. Of Sebastian we can and shall speak before Rosa. And first, my mother writes word you have been a couple of days at Rotherington!"

"I have," said Mark. "But you don't inquire after your father, who—"

"Who came up with you, and is very well, and whom I shall see in an hour's time," interrupted Edward. "And so you have met *Autumn*?"

Mark smiled, and Edward continued.

"My mother is very mysterious, and says nothing about you and her! Pray, may I ask what you thought of her? what you said to her?"

"Why, I said to her that I had a faithless

friend, to whom I lent some idle verses, on h[illegible] solemn promise not to show them to a soul; an[illegible] who kept his promise so well as to give the[illegible] to her brother, who gave them to her, in a day o[illegible] two."

"Good; and she said she doubted not you were very glad he had done so, for you had no wish to put your candle under a bushel."

"Upon my word, Master Edward, you do brazen out a breach of promise most gloriously."

"And upon my word, Mr. Mark, you do run from the point most craftily. Come, tell me, are you very far gone?"

"I shall trust you once again so far," said Mark, "as to confess that this has become a subject upon which you must not joke with me before others. And now, tell me, how speed you with the lovely, lively, little Laura?"

"All is going on *comme il faut* there," replied Edward; "but I fear this unlucky business, let it end the best way it may, will ruin Sib with Marianne. Mr. Smith, I believe, is in attendance on her, hurrying on his advantage."

"Devil take him!" cried Mark.

"Amen," responded Edward.

"By the bye, where is Charles Chessalette?" inquired Mark.

"In this house, confined to his bed, through being thrown from a curricle," said Edward.

Their conference was interrupted by the entrance of Lord Branville's valet, who said his Lordship would be happy to receive Mr. Masborough in his dressing-room, if he would excuse it, as it would save his waiting.

Mark followed the man, and found Lord Branville in his dressing-gown, having advanced about half way through his toilet.

His Lordship put out his hand, and said he was glad to see him, "and a little surprised," he added, "as Charles Chessalette had told him he was in Italy."

"I have been there, my Lord," replied Mark; "in fact, I have been in England only about a week, and I am returning towards Italy to-morrow. I have been visiting Mr. Chessalette's father."

"Indeed!"

"I there left Lady Branville's mother, who gave me a commission—"

Here Mark paused a moment, observing his Lordship to look rather uneasy at her name—however, he proceeded:

—"And my commission was to bring Mr. Sileby to town, as she did not wish him to undertake the journey alone, owing to the feeble nervous state to which he has been reduced by his son's unfortunate situation."

Mark again paused, to let this exordium take its effect. Lord Branville took a pinch of snuff, poked his fire, pulled his slipper up at the heel, and exclaimed,

"It's a confounded dull-looking sort of a day. 'Beg your pardon—you were saying something?"

"I was going to deliver to your Lordship a message from Mr. Sileby."

"Yes!"

"He would be very glad if your Lordship would favour him with an interview."

Lord Branville rose from his chair, took a turn round the room, made a sort of uneasy noise between a hiss and a whistle, and looked out of the window. Then, turning to Mark, he said :—

"You see, Mr. Masborough, this unpleasant business is—in fact, I may say—not of my seeking. To be candid with you, I am a little surprised that the family don't carry the thing with a high hand, and drop my acquaintance. Mr. Sebastian thought fit to turn gambler, and to borrow money of me, though, in fact, we were at the time not on the very best of terms. However, considering the connexion, which, by the bye, occurred in a manner I never could account for to this day, for I 'm sure I always thought I should have lived a bachelor, and I think I could call you as a witness: you were at Sileby with me, I rather think ? "

Mark nodded assent.

" Ah, I was quite sure you were ; and that being the case, you could not but see, I 'm sure, that the connexion came about in a God-knows-what sort of a way. However, as I was saying, the

thing was done—I was in for it—and so I 've had to make the best of it : not that Lady Branville is not a very good sort of person, I say nothing to the contrary, but her brothers *would* interfere in my domestic arrangements : now, as I did not marry *them*, *they* had no cursed legal *right* to molest me."

" And your Lordship had the kindness to advance Sebastian a sum of money," said Mark, wishing to avoid a detail of grievances which he had heard of before, and had no wish to hear repeated.

" Yes, six hundred pounds I gave him a cheque for ; and curse me, if by way of paying me with gratitude and interest, he did not alter it to nine hundred !"

" So your Lordship believes," said Mark ; " otherwise I am sure you would never have become his prosecutor."

" Of course, quite so," said Lord Branville.

" But, my Lord, that cheque passed through the hands of a person of very doubtful character—."

" Sir, he is a friend of mine."

" My Lord, Sebastian Sileby is a friend of mine."

"What may you happen to mean, sir?"

"I mean, my Lord, that your imputation of forgery against my friend is as injurious to him as any imputation I may feel called upon to make against Mr. Smith."

"Mr. Masborough, I hope, will do me the favour to note the slight distinction of the two cases. Mr. Smith's character is only assailed by vague aspersion; Mr. Sileby's by written evidence."

Mark felt that he was growing too warm to enact the careful negociator; he therefore paused a moment for reflection, and then, bearing in mind that he was not to consider his own feelings but his friend's situation, he proceeded:

"My Lord, it is not my business to *argue* with your Lordship. I should be glad if I might be permitted to attempt to *persuade* you to favour me with a calm hearing. I can well imagine your Lordship's indignation against conduct which must appear so ungrateful as forgery in return for kindness; and that kindness too shown at a time when perhaps the claim was least strong."

"Certainly, Mr. Masborough, your observation is very just, very."

"But, my Lord, I trust you will bear with me for a minute, while I suggest that, in the event of a conviction, your Lordship is disgracing the family of your own wife—."

"Very unfortunate, no doubt—but justice, you know, has no relations."

"A stern maxim, my Lord! But again, in the event of an acquittal, your Lordship will appear to have preferred a false charge."

"I fancy, Mr. Masborough, there is little chance of an acquittal; the case is too clear. If it were not, why should the party seek to avoid the trial so earnestly? Your errand, I apprehend, is to that effect; and I cannot suppose Mr. Sileby's proposed interview would be with any other motive; and by the bye, sir, if I am right why does he not call? He cannot surely expect that I, who have no favour to ask and have not sought the meeting, should go to him!"

"I do not think he will stand upon ceremony, my Lord; and I am free to confess that he has

the object in view which you suppose. But your Lordship may well imagine reasons why the family are anxious to avoid the exposure of a trial, and, I will add, the risk; for, though I, for one, am thoroughly persuaded of Sebastian's innocence, yet as circumstances will look very suspicious, and as (your Lordship will pardon what I say, as my argument is incomplete without it) Mr. Smith will no doubt stick to his text, and swear positively that he gave him the cheque unaltered, and as he received it from you, the jury, not knowing him quite so well as I do, may chance to believe him; and then, remember, the offence is capital!"

"Mr. Masborough, allow me to tell you that one main reason for my originally entering upon this prosecution was, that Mr. Edward Sibley and my wife threw out the very same insinuation that you have now done against my friend. He and I considered it due to him on that account to proceed. By what you have now said I am confirmed in that determination. But in truth you

well know it no longer rests with me; I am bound over."

"Your Lordship might do what it was said ought to have been done in Dr. Dodd's case—destroy the instrument."

"And leave it open to the world to say my friend Smith had been the forger!"

"The whole matter would soon be forgotten, if you would adopt my advice. Perhaps you will yet consider of it? At all events your Lordship will not refuse to see Sebastian's broken-hearted parent—your own father-in-law?"

"Why, I do dislike *scenes* most *particularly*—but I suppose I should be cried up as a monster if I did not see him."

"He is at Fladong's. Shall he come here, or——"

"I will go to him there," said his Lordship. Mark thanked him, and asked him at what hour he might tell Mr. Sileby to be within, adding, "he was going with her Ladyship and Edward to visit Sebastian *in prison*."

At the last word, Lord Branville startled, and turned pale. After a short pause, he said, "'Twas his own fault!"

Mark, thinking before he tried any further argument, he would see what effect the appearance of the father would have, repeated his question as to the hour Lord Branville would call at Fladong's; and, having received an answer, he took his leave.

On returning to Lady Branville, he told her the result of his interview, though he was very far from telling her all the particulars. Edward said that he had been to pay Chessalette a visit in his room, and he was very desirous of asking Mark how he did. Accordingly Mark went to him, and found him in good spirits, but in considerable pain. He had broken an arm, and he complained heavily of his constant ill-luck.

"The first time I met you, I was all but drowned. The next time I was very near having that French fellow's blood on my conscience! Now I am crippled in the wing!—To be sure, it might have been the neck!—And so Edward

tells me you have been visiting the governor and the girls? By God, I hope you did not touch upon politics?" Mark shook his head.

"You did? Oh that I had but given you a hint! The old fellow is sadly benighted—a rank old Tory as ever raved about Billy Pitt. And did you sport the ultra-rad?"

"A little too much; but you must make peace for me. Your father was very kind till I unfortunately showed my cloven foot. I assure you I regret getting into his bad books more than I can express. When you see him, try what you can do to set me up again."

Mark did not like to lose the opportunity of doing something towards paving the way for a reconciliation with Matilda's father.

Edward now came into the room, to tell him his sister was waiting; and so, leaving Chessalette, he accompanied them to Fladong's, where Mr. Sileby was expecting them.

They then set off to visit Sebastian.

The meeting between him and his father was affecting in the extreme, but it could not be a

long one, as Mr. Sileby was obliged to return to Fladong's in time to meet his son-in-law.

Lord Branville was punctual to the hour he had named. He seemed shocked at Mr. Sileby's altered appearance. The hairs on his head were turned perceptibly whiter, his form seemed suddenly bent, and it was evident that old age had gained a great victory over his frame within a short period.

Mr. Sileby did not argue with Lord Branville, as Mark had done; he could only entreat. His Lordship expressed his regret, but said, as he had said before to Mark, that the affair no longer rested with him. He added, however, that he should direct that the prosecution should be conducted with all fairness, and in no respect vindictively; and, with this assurance, Mr. Sileby was forced to be content.

During the time Mr. Sileby was waiting at Fladong's for Lord Branville, Lady Branville had taken Mark in her carriage, and Edward had accompanied them, to the Foreign Secretary's. There

Mark obtained despatches for him to convey to the authorities at Florence, which were very satisfactory. The rest of the morning Mark made preparations for having his two witnesses and himself in readiness to depart on the following day.

As Mr. Sileby refused to dine at the house of Lord Branville, even though his Lordship was again going out to his friend Colonel O'Tatoe, his daughter agreed to dine and spend the evening with him and Mark at their hotel. Edward was to be with them if he could, but as he had again to be with the lawyers, how much of his company they might have was uncertain.

It turned out that they had none; he did not return to dinner. In the evening, Mr. Sileby, fatigued with the mental exertions of the morning, retired early; and Lady Branville and Mark had a long tête-à-tête.

Lady Branville dwelt with a painful interest on the days of their former acquaintance. Her eyes revived their former fire from recollection, her re-

grets were full of eloquence, her voice full of pathos, at the scenes of the past. Like the nightingale,

> "to deepen her sadness,
> She lean'd on a thorn."

At length it grew so late that she said she should not wait any longer for Edward, and Mark escorted her home.

CHAPTER IV.

THE following morning Mark took leave of Mr. Sileby, and set out with his two witnesses on their long journey. Edward accompanied him for a short distance, and then returned to town.

As Mark proceeded on his way with his new acquaintance, he had plenty of leisure for reflection. He recalled to mind with what different feelings he had last pursued the same route. *Then* he was seeking one whom *now* he was leaving behind. *Then* he had not known her, *now* he knew and loved! And if alteration had taken place in his own feelings and circumstances, how much greater, he thought, had they been in those of others! He pictured to himself the whole circle of his acquaintance as they *then* were and as they were *now*. Rosa he had seen sadly

altered and greatly fallen from her former buoyant spirits. *Now* she was languid, thoughtful, melancholy, harassed, care-worn; *then* she had been gay, lively, almost wild — a hoyden, a flirt.

But no one struck him as more suddenly changed than Lord Branville. He had first met him a light-hearted disciple of Nimrod,—a good fellow, — a jolly companion. Who rode more boldly? Who was more mirthful at the social board? *Now* he seemed to have lost all his energies; his spirits were dull or forced; his habits were altered; his very manners seemed to have been bitten by the frost, and to have passed into "the sere and yellow leaf." Could it be that he owed all this to his cares, and the first tinging of his curly sunny locks with grey, to domestic anxiety? Was it possible that his accomplished lady, so graceful to strangers,—so winning to acquaintance,—so attractive to companions,—so fascinating to friends, could be only the actress of a part? Was she—so beautiful and lovely in the eyes of others—to him only a

bramble and a thorn? And Sebastian, too, who had appeared to carry boyhood, even childhood, on into the next period of life; who had never shown fatigue with the longest run,—had never owned to drowsiness in the hardest night,—alas! how sadly changed was he! The inmate of a prison, the outcast of his equals, the one who brought a slur upon his family, the suspected, the accused, he wore the pale livery of the dungeon.

But this gloomy picture admitted some relief of light. There was Edward, amiable and indefatigable, foregoing his own prospect of love and felicity that he might devote himself to forwarding his brother's defence.

There was Matilda! — Around her played a sacred halo of romance, separating her from the vulgar air of worldly cares and every-day life. When he thought of her, what visions of hope and joy filled his brain! Yet he was not without anxiety, for his quarrel with her father augured ill for his interests. Should a rival appear during his absence, he little doubted

that Sir Charles, who he thought must have perceived his attentions, would lend his aid against him.

But the theme of the greatest anxiety—for, after all, he had faith in the regard of Matilda—was his uncle. If his explanatory letter should fail in satisfying the Squire that no slight had been intended, he felt that he should not be easy in receiving his bounty; and without that there was an end to his life of ease and independence. Still he imagined that he was not so unreasonable as not to be open to conviction, and he thought his last letter was a perfect defence.

His able and artful ally, Mrs. Sileby, also appeared on the scene. He believed she would take every step to keep alive his memory in the breast of Matilda; and yet he was not without distrust. His cause through her support seemed to lose its honest character, to be contaminated with deceit, and hardly to deserve success. The ring!—how had he come by it? Here was another subject for speculation, and one which,

recurring from time to time, remained as great a mystery when he arrived at Florence as it had been at first.

On reaching that beautiful city, which he and his two companions did without any thing happening to impede their journey, they drove to the same hotel that Mark had inhabited before. As they got out of the carriage the very first person their eyes met was the French accuser! He had just been, they learnt, inquiring of the landlord whether the English witnesses were returned? His anxiety on this head was easily explained by the circumstance that it only wanted a day or two to the one appointed for Derwent's trial.

Mark found Derwent in good spirits, and well assured he would return in time.

The day arrived: — the investigation began. The accuser was called. He was not to be found. It turned out that he had left Florence the evening Mark returned.

The result was, there was no witness for the prosecution, and the case for the defence was

so abundantly clear, that Derwent was set at liberty with honour, and without delay.

The two English witnesses chose to remain a short time where they were, but Derwent agreed to accompany Mark home.

They accordingly returned to England as rapidly as possible, Mark having promised to lose no time, that he might render what assistance he could to the defence of Sebastian Sileby; and also being very anxious to meet his uncle, and receive the assurance of his continued friendship.

As soon as they arrived in London, they hastened to Fladong's, where Mark found a letter from his uncle telling him he was at his old quarters in Bond Street. Thither he repaired and was welcomed by the Squire in his hearty manner, and with evident affection. The old gentleman apologized for the letter he had too hastily written, and acknowledged his error in accusing Mark of neglect. The happiness of the latter at being restored to his old footing, and all unpleasantness cleared away, may be easily imagined.

material assistance; and therefore he
to accompany his uncle on a tour
Wales, making only the bargain that
be allowed to be in London at the t
bastian, which was to come on in a m
uncle readily agreed to return by tha
he too should have to attend his ne
Messrs. Vice, Screw, File, and Pi
were conducting his appeal from the
cellor's decision on the Rotherington ca

Derwent found he was likely to be
and as he was in too unsettled a sta
recent travels and adventures to be in
for applying himself to his former gra
he eagerly accepted an invitation giv
Charles Chessalette, to whom Mark

he was going to enjoy the benefit of the country air.

Charles wrote to his eldest sister, desiring her to apprise his father that he was going to bring a friend; and by return of post he received a letter to say, they should be glad to see him, and mentioning that "Mrs. Sileby was now again staying with them; for that she had told them the unfortunate situation of her son, when she found by letters from London that there was no longer any chance of exposure being ultimately avoided." With that intelligence her spirits had sunk, and she had felt herself unequal to entertain her visiters and hide her feelings, although at the same time she had no doubt eventually of a favourable result. On her disclosing the real state of the case, the young ladies and Sir Charles, who had been led to believe that Mr. Sileby had been summoned to London on business, but would quickly return, pressed her to go back with them and allow them to strive to cheer her, instead of her remaining, after the departure of such of her visiters as

had arrived, and the putting-off of such as were to come, in solitude at home.

For Rotherington therefore Charles and Derwent prepared to depart, and the next day they left town accordingly. The same day Mr. Masborough and Mark set out on their tour into Wales.

CHAPTER V.

By easy stages Mr. Masborough and his nephew proceeded towards the Land of the Leek. Bristol the Squire carefully avoided, and therefore he took the other road by Gloucester. Mark only once alluded to the report he had heard of his having bought an estate at a place called Loseby.

"Ay, and I did *lose by* it, or rather I had a narrow escape of doing so," said the Squire. "Therefore *favete linguis*, my dear boy,—say no more about it."

"I will avoid the subject," said Mark.

"Do so,—but note, I did come, after all, pretty well out of the scrape, and I made money by the speculation. Still there is no doubt I was taken in, and when such is the case, one does not like

to be reminded of the blunder; for it is not in politics alone that a mistake is worse than a crime."

On reaching Swansea, Mr. Masborough and Mark happened to see a small sailing-packet arrive from Ilfracombe, and they learnt it would return the next day.

"What sayest thou, Mark, to 'a trip across the green' of the sea? I have heard much of Ilfracombe and its neighbourhood. They say it is most romantic."

"I have heard, sir," replied Mark, "the most wonderful accounts of Devon, how the roses ever blow, and the streams ever flow, and the myrtles grow in every hedge-row; and so let us go."

"'*Aut insanit homo aut versus facit.*' The dear boy is demented at the very thought. On what two-headed Parnassus hast thou been sleeping, O Mark? Go we will, though; I have a mind—'*fert animus*'—to see Ilfracombe. Let us ascertain the hour they will start, and tell them to send for our bags. Giles will remain here with the horses, &c. till we return; and so now that is

fixed, and therefore, Mark, expound, why am I like Æneas?"

"Because you are—'*celsâ in puppi jam certus eundi!*'"

"Good boy! you are an Œdipus."

"So are you, sir,—when you've the gout."

"Don't mention it—'*Jubes renovare dolorem.*' Let me give you a lesson in the art of conversation, *mî Marce.* Never needlessly introduce unpleasant topics! Why should you? It is as bad as painting painful subjects, which, the more true they are, disgust the more; and now do not think I am preaching what I do not also practise. Did I not neglect ever once to write to you whilst you were on the continent, that I might not be led to introduce bad tidings, such as the loss of my law-suit and my bad bargain; or even by the tenour and tone of my letters cause you to suspect that something was going on wrong?"

"It was very kind of you, my dear uncle; and though I regretted not hearing from you, now I see it was very thoughtful. I admit the truth of your

theory, and I feel corrected and instructed. I have heard another rule."

"What is it? '*Candidus imperti.*'"

"That you should never talk of what you cannot eat."

"That is a good rule, too, but of limited application, as it only extends over dinner-time. However, let us, on that hint, go back to the inn, and order dinner;—'*Cras ingens iterabimus æquor.*'"

Accordingly, the next day they embarked on board the small packet. Giles, having stowed away their bags, begged a blessing on their voyage, and prayed God to preserve them from sea-sickness and drowning; for which his master severely reprimanded him, as the very mention of the former word had almost made him feel the reality.

The master of the vessel was a Captain Fitz-Thompson, and as soon as they had cleared out of the harbour, Mr. Masborough fell into conversation with him. He asked what accommodation they should meet with at Ilfracombe?

There 's the Golden Lion, sir," replied the Palinurus of the packet, "dear and dirty; and the Ship, cheap and comfortable. But I should by all manner of means recommend the Lion, as it is called the head inn, and gentlemen like to go where they are charged high, if they have no other advantage."

The Squire thanked him for his good advice, and whispered to Mark that he had no doubt the Ship was related to the packet, some way or other; a remark which they found amply verified, as Mark wormed out of one of the sailors that the landlady was the captain's sister.

On landing, Mr. Masborough ordered the bags to be taken to the Lion, and wished the captain good-day, with many thanks for his attentions.

At the door of the Lion they saw a very handsome phaeton, with a pair of magnificent grays. A servant stood at the horses' heads, playing with a fine Newfoundland dog; and the whole equipage wore a most *distingue* air.

The Squire and his nephew talked to the landlord about beds.

"Really, gentlemen, I am so full, I must get you beds out. Very good beds at Mrs. Hencock's, only four doors off; and you can have a private sitting-room here, if you please, as well as the use of the public room."

"That will do. We'll just look at our beds, and then come back and talk to you about dining."

So saying, the Squire took Mark's arm, and, followed by the baggage, they went to Mrs. Hencock's.

They were received by a brisk little woman, in a feather tippet, who hopped about and showed them two rooms. They had already seen enough of the little town of Ilfracombe, to be quite convinced that they must not be too fastidious as to accommodation, and therefore they decided that the rooms would do, and accordingly they desired the man to leave the bags, and Mrs. Hencock to send up some towels and fresh water.

The porter was gone, and the Squire had already stripped off his coat, when the good lady returned with the towels.

"Sally is out, sir," said she, "so I've brought

them myself. You'll be very comfortable, I hope. And one thing I *can* promise you, which is a very great thing for a poulterer's wife to say—You'll have no fleas."

"Fleas!" cried Mr. Masborough. "Egad, I never thought of that. I suppose you swarm."

"You will not catch one," said Mrs. Hencock. "We have not such a thing—absolutely, not such a thing. Sometimes, ladies that are sent to sleep out from the Lion are so particular that they will not come to us for fear of them;—but we have none."

The Squire knew it would be in vain, unless he could catch a flea, to contradict her, to argue the point, or even to inquire how it came into her head to mention the subject; he therefore gave up the matter, hoping for the best, and wondering withal by what means she prevented any of a race, so populous in poultry, from emigrating up stairs, and colonizing the higher countries.

As soon as he and Mark had performed their ablutions they returned to the inn. Just before they got to the door, a lady and gentleman issued

forth and ascended the phaeton which was still there; the landlord stood bowing behind. The lady was dressed in a scarlet pelisse, much trimmed and braided, with a blue bonnet and a white veil. Round her neck was a thick gold chain; at her waist a watch studded with jewels; over her shoulders flowed a profusion of sandy ringlets. The gentleman was short and ill-shaped, but he wore mustachios and enormous whiskers, covering so much of his face that it looked as if his eyes and nose were peeping out through the rent of a fur cap. He, too, had a gold chain over his neck, from which depended an eye-glass.

The gentleman handled the reins, and the steeds began to prance. "I say, aw, landlord," cried he, "I expect, aw, a friend to arrive by the Bristol steamer to-day, and, aw, he will want a bed."

"We will have one got ready this moment, sir. Here, Susan, Ada, where are you? Get No. 6. ready directly for a gentleman."

The gentleman nodded, the landlord bowed, Ada curtsied, the dog barked, the hostler pulled

the forelock of his own head, the groom let go the forelock of the horse next to him, and away flew the gleaners, lady, and all.

"I've seen that man's face before," said Mr. Musborough to Mark; "but for the life and soul of me I cannot recollect where. Landlord, who is that gentleman?"

"It's Mr. and Mrs. Higgins, of Loseby Castle, near Bristol."

"Hog—Hog—Higgins!" gasped the Squire. "Of Loseby what?—*Mirabile dictu!*"

"Do you know him, sir? He did not seem to know you," said the host.

"And so you have room for Mr. Higgins's friend, but not for us?" said Mr. Musborough.

The host was ready with his excuse; "he thought the two gentlemen would wish to be together, and he had only one bed to spare." He then inquired whether they would dine at the public table or alone.

"Oh, at the public, by all means," said Mark.

"Right," said the Squire. "Pray, landlord, do the Higginses dine in public?"

"Oh, yes, sir, yes. Mr. Hoggins is so affable —no airs. And Mrs. Hoggins is a very nice lady; they've only been married a week. Mr. Hoggins is monstratiously rich, sir. He made a wonderful speculation near Bristol, by buying an estate, and selling it off in small lots, for villas and gardens. They say, he cleared thirty or forty thousand pounds or more in no time; and his partner as much. Mr. Hoggins kept a good bit of ground to himself, and built a fine house on it, and it is becoming a very genteel neighbourhood: all the rich merchants of Bristol are building their country-boxes there. I'm told he got it 'nation cheap. He bought it of some silly crazy old fool that did not know the value, and who sold it for an old song. I should think he must be fine and mad if he knows what Mr. Hoggins has made by it."

Mr. Masborough and his nephew kept their countenances, and were highly amused by the landlord's history, which divided their attention with the beauty of the scenery, greatly as they admired that during their walk before dinner.

At dinner Mr. Masborough found himself placed opposite Mr. and Mrs. Hoggins. They were, like himself, at the lower end of the table, that being the place assigned to the last comers. Mark filled the Vice-President's chair.

The Squire could perceive that Mr. Hoggins knew him well enough, though he affected not to do so. He resolved to amuse himself and Mark with the new great man, and to teaze him a little by way of punishment.

"I believe, madam," said he, bowing to the bride, "I have had the pleasure of meeting you on a former occasion?"

"I dinna ken," said the lady.

"Perhaps, sir," said the Squire, addressing her husband, "*you* may remember me?"

"No—aw—I cannot say I have the honour to —aw—"

"I believe I cannot be mistaken! Surely, I have the pleasure of seeing my old acquaintance the Earl and Countess of Ringingloe? I hope you left all well at the Castle?"

Mr. Hoggins now began to feel easy again in

the persuasion that his mustachios and altered appearance would preserve his incognito, whilst the eyes of his bonnie and bony bride sparkled at her being taken for a Countess.

"You are mistaken in our names, sir," said Mr. Hoggins.

"Ay, hinny, and so he is," interposed the bride, "but he 's unco right, though, in thinking we live at a castle."

"Very odd," said Mr. Masborough, "very odd! I 'm so sure I have seen you before, sir, and your voice seems not new to me—"

"Sir, aw—you have the advantage of me," replied Mr. Hoggins; and then he turned and entered into conversation with his neighbour, in order to cut short the discussion.

"*Eureka! eureka!*" exclaimed the Squire. "I have it now, I recollect. Oh, Lord bless me! how could I take you for the Earl? Why, I remember you—but you are so altered! You dress so differently—and then these mustachios! Have you entered the army, Mr. Hoggins? or perhaps I ought to say, Captain Hoggins?"

Mr. Hoggins, perceiving he was recognised, and remembering the shabby dress he wore, and the different appearance he exhibited the first time he met Mr. Masborough, now resolved to try a different system.

"No, sir," he replied, "I am plain Mr. H., as ever; and, as ever, your humble servant. I now recollect you, and I have to beg your pardon for not remembering you at first. I have good reason to remember Mr. Masborough. My dear, let me introduce you to the gentleman who so kindly gave me the refusal of Loseby."

Mr. Masborough now thought he had played the ill-natured, a part not very natural to him, long enough. He therefore took a glass of wine with the bride, and congratulated Mr. Hoggins on the excellence of his bargain.

In the evening, the friend Mr. Hoggins had announced arrived, and proved to be his partner, Mr. Higginbottom. Mr. Masborough remembered he had always been a dandy and a conceited person, and therefore he was not surprised to see that prosperity had made him perfectly un-

bearable. He was too offensive to joke with, too disgusting to quiz. The Squire could endure the public table no longer, and he proposed to Mark to retreat.

This determination was moreover somewhat accelerated by a confession of Mrs. Hencock's maid, Sally, who was artless enough to declare that her mistress was quite mistaken about the fleas, which in fact were so numerous and so voracious that she had never passed a night alone in peace since she had been in her service. Mr. Masborough felt more disposed to believe the story of Sally than of her mistress, and his judgment was fully justified by the events of the night. He tossed, turned, tore, and swore, but it would not do. The hotter his fury, the brisker the attack of the Lilliputian tigers! No variety of adjuration could exorcise their restless spirits, though he cursed them in English, Latin, and even Greek.

The next day they went to Linton, and admired the Valley of Rocks. The following day they returned to the Golden Lion, and dined in private.

After another restless night spent by the Squire and Mark in the populous sheets of Mrs. Hencock, they reimbarked for Swansea.

When they had pursued the whole line of the coast of South Wales, they found the time for their return was at hand, and pointed their course homewards, taking a different route to the one by which they had come.

They had got as far as Monmouth, when Mark happened to stroll into the news-room. On looking over a paper he found the announcement of the marriage of Tigranes Plantagenet White Smith, Esq., of the county of Sligo, to Marianne, eldest daughter of Richard Lumley, Esq.

Disgusted beyond measure at this triumph of knavery, he threw down the paper and hurried back to the inn.

"I am glad you are come, Mark," said his uncle. "I have been walking about the town looking for you. I have some unpleasant news for you. You must prepare yourself to hear it."

"Oh, you mean that scoundrel Smith's marriage? I 've just seen it in the papers."

"I mean something of a very different sort, Mark, I am sorry to say. There is an express come after us."

"Something about Sebastian Sileby?"

"No, nearer home. Your father is very ill."

"Is he dead?"

"No. He wishes to see you. He has sent for you, and the express has followed us from Swansea. It appears, your father wrote to you in London, but learning you were in South Wales, and being taken worse, he sent off a young man, the son of a tenant of mine, with orders to find you. I will go with you."

No time was lost. They ordered four horses, and taking the messenger on the box with Giles, they set off for the Rectory with all possible speed.

CHAPTER VI.

On reaching his father's house, Mark anxiously inquired whether he was still alive, and was told he had come too late, his father having been dead some hours. The medical attendant took the Squire aside, saying he had something to communicate. His disclosure was to the following effect:—"As soon as I saw there were no hopes for my patient, I suggested to him the propriety of settling his worldly affairs. He told me (I was quite alone with him) that 'he had already done so; he had left all his children exactly equal, but he felt very uneasy in consequence of his treatment of his eldest son.' He said, 'he knew *you* would amply provide for him, but that right was right, and he ought to have his godmother's property.' He confessed 'he had procured that lady, who is in truth

in almost too imbecile a state to make a will at all, to make one in favour of his second son, who, he had persuaded her to believe, was her godson. This will he had taken possession of, and in order to guard against any interference by which she might be led to alter it, he had bribed her servant to send him all her letters before she delivered them to her mistress. Such as he thought harmless he returned; but others he destroyed; amongst the rest, one of yours, written some time ago, and making some unpleasant disclosures on the subject of her godson. This preyed heavily on his mind, and he charged me to entreat his son's forgiveness and yours, and to beg you would see Mrs. Sellwood.' After he had made this disclosure he was easier, and he wrote to his son; and, when he found he was not in London, he sent off after him into Wales; but too late, as you see."

Mr. Masborough thanked the surgeon for his information, which he forthwith proceeded to communicate to Mark. The meeting of Mark and his favourite sister, Amelia, was very affecting; and his reception by all his brothers and sisters with the

exception of George, who declined coming down to shake hands, was affectionate. Mark's grief was in truth not so severe as it might have been under different circumstances; and, as he was no hypocrite, he did not pretend that it was. The deferred atonement of a death-bed confession could not efface at once from his mind the long series of ill-treatment and the late treachery which had been practised towards him. That his father had thought of him at last with more kindness and justice than heretofore did indeed revive the latent embers, so hard to be extinguished, of natural affection; but still his feelings were very different to what they would have been had he acted towards him the part of a parent, or what they would have been had it been his kind uncle whom he had lost. It must be remembered that if the instinct of filial affection is a strong one, parental injustice is more felt and harder to be borne than ill usage from any other quarter. It is, in fact, a double injury, consisting of the wrong, be it what it may, and of the withholding of the benefits

which a child has a right to expect—a right vested in him when his parents bring him into existence.

It was arranged that the funeral should take place on the fourth day, and Mr. Masborough resolved in the interval to see Mrs. Sellwood. She lived about seventeen or eighteen miles off, at a small cottage in a retired village.

The old lady was busy in her little garden, which divided her house from the road. At the sight of the equipage, she had let drop the bunch of flowers she had just been gathering; but when the carriage with its well-appointed horses and livery stopped at her own gate, her astonishment was only to be equalled by her pride.

Mr. Masborough got out, followed by Mark. She knew neither of them.

"I see you don't know me, Mrs. Sellwood. My name is Masborough."

"Masborough! Eh? Why, you have got a coloured coat on."

"You are thinking of my brother. I am not a

parson; I am John Masborough. Don't you remember?"

"I dare say it is you—and do you remember me? I am altered, I believe. I used to be called very good-looking."

"I think I should have remembered you, but it's many years since we met. Here is your godson."

"Well, now, he is altered, I'm sure! It is not so very long since I saw him. Is it George? Bless me, how you are improved in your looks since I saw you and your father in the winter!"

"This is not the same as you saw," said Mr. Masborough. "This is Mark."

"Mark!" cried the old lady. "Mark! That was the name! and I could not think of it; and they told me it was George. But I remember it now I hear it, as if the christening was only last week—though it is much longer, I know. Oh dear!—Mark, to be sure! I wore my pink and blue at the christening."

"And I'll answer for it, you looked quite be-

witching," said the Squire. "Well, this is your godson, sure enough."

"But how came his papa to call him George? I've called him George in my will."

"You must alter that, my dear," said the Squire.

"Yes, yes; any name you like: and how did you leave your papa?" inquired Mrs. Sellwood, turning to Mark.

"I—he—"

"He is gathered, my dear," said the Squire.

The old lady looked as if she did not comprehend, then at her flowers, and then asked "if they would not come into the house?"

They walked in, and whilst Mrs. Sellwood was extracting from a cupboard a bottle of orange wine, and directing her servant to bring in some plum-cake, the Squire took a sheet of paper, on which he in three lines made a will, leaving every thing to Mark. The purport of this he fully explained, and with some little difficulty succeeded in getting the old lady to comprehend

it. She said it was her intention to leave all to her godson, whatever his name might be, and she now well remembered it was Mark. Mr. Masborough then summoned her servant, told her that "her roguery in sending her mistress's letters to the Rev. Mr. Masborough was all found out; that he was gathered, cropped in the rankness of his iniquity, and gone to answer for his share of the transaction." The affrighted woman threw herself on her knees, begged a thousand pardons of God, her mistress, the Squire, Mark, and Giles, who also entered the room, being wanted as a witness. She confessed she had received ten pounds at first, and was to have a present of five pounds a year for her information. The Squire reprimanded her; and then the signature of "*Theresa Sellwood*" having been affixed, she, Giles, and the Squire witnessed the execution, which it was necessary for three to do, inasmuch as part of the bequest was real property.

Before the Squire and Mark went away, it was arranged that the old lady, who was in a state

to require great attention, should live with the children of his deceased brother. She would be carefully attended to by Amelia, and at the same time she would be a sort of matronly sanction to her and her sisters. Mr. Masborough said he should purchase for them a small house as soon as he could hear of one in the neighbourhood of a suitable size.

This being settled, and Mr. Masborough having announced his intention of taking Amelia under his especial care, they returned to the Rectory, and remained there till the funeral was over. After which Mark set off for London, where the Squire promised to join him when he had taken such steps as he judged necessary for arranging the affairs of the family at the Rectory and securing their present comfort.

His uncle had requested Mark to establish himself once more at Stevens's, in order that they might be together. Thither Mark repaired; and he found a note waiting his arrival from Edward Sileby, and another from Lady Branville. The latter was a condolence on the death of his

father, couched in the kindest terms; the former made no allusion to his loss, but expressed great anxiety on Edward's part to see him immediately on his return to town.

Mark lost no time in obeying the summons, and was so fortunate as to find his friend at Lord Branville's. Edward said he was going to visit his brother, and accompany his father, who was with him then, back to his hotel. Mark agreed to walk with him, and they set off together. During their walk Edward related the various events that had taken place since Mark had been away. "His brother's trial," he said, "was to come on in three days, and of course the family were in some anxiety, though not so great as Mark seemed to expect; for, whilst Smith," he continued, "had made the most of the circumstance, and had urged the certainty of a conviction as an argument with Marianne Lumley to hasten their marriage, because, he professed to think, it would be indelicate for him to take such a step shortly after having been the means, however reluctantly, of the death of an-

other, our family have none of us entertained so serious a view of it. I believe I am the only one who thinks a conviction *probable*. My mother now quite scouts the idea. She felt at first the disgrace of the charge, but she has learnt to look forward cheerfully and certainly to an acquittal. My father does the same, but less sanguinely perhaps. Rosa yet again anticipates the like result, but with more misgiving. She says, if there should be a conviction, the same day she leaves his lordship's roof. For myself, I must say, I rather hope than expect an acquittal. I am as perfectly convinced as ever of Sebastian's innocence and Smith's guilt,—but I foresee that appearances will be against us on the evidence. Were it not for my father and mother, if the worst happens, I would for ever quit the land of our disgrace. I shall try to persuade them to go with me into exile."

"You must hope better things," said Mark. "Truth is great, and will prevail."

"Generally, but not always. By the bye,

talking of truth, is there any truth in the report about Derwent?"

"What report?" inquired Masborough.

"That he is going to marry one of the Chessalettes."

"Which? Have you heard which?"

"I'll look at my mother's letter again," said Edward. "Here is my authority. Let me see. Heavens! what a mistake I've made! I see an injunction, which I quite forgot—'Mind, Edward, this report is to be kept a profound secret, especially from your friend Mark M.'—I have kept it nicely."

"Edward!" cried Mark, laying his hand on his friend's arm, "I feel alarmed. You know the terms I stand on towards Matilda."

"Oh, it cannot be she, of course," replied Edward. "My mother is too fond of you, and knows too well your attachment, not to have allowed me to warn you, had that been the case. It must be either the eldest or youngest, Mary or Jane."

"Your mother might have enjoined secrecy,

because she knew my feelings, to spare them."

"But Derwent? He could never be so treacherous!"

"I have full faith in his honour: but you know he is made up of odd notions and wild principles, and acts differently to other people, though, he believes, honestly. Why should it be a secret from me else?"

"Perhaps, for a surprise. I see my mother uses only initials. As I have broken her command, I may as well read you the passage. It is—'Mr. Derwent seems a very strange incomprehensible personage, and not agreeable in my eyes, though he evidently is in others. I do not think he will leave Rotherington without taking M. C. with him,—at least the little birds whisper so; but mind, Edward, this report, &c.' as I read to you before."

"I had the vanity to think Matilda rewarded my admiration with some little regard—and, Edward, on the sandy foundation of that vanity have I built my hopes! Derwent, I know, is

my superior in almost every thing, and well do I remember his expression of earnest desire to be introduced to the unseen singer at Florence; and I am one who have great faith in such impulses. I never confided to him my attachment, as perhaps I ought to have done, and was almost on the point of doing. To this moment he may be ignorant of it; or, if he knows it, he may have learnt it too late. Besides, people of high principles in other things will cheat in horses and women. And Derwent, too, I know has peculiar notions on love and friendship. But here we are, I must leave you. I am going back to call on Lady Branville. When can I see you?"

"Breakfast with us in the morning."

To this Mark agreed; and, leaving his friend, turned back towards Grosvenor Square, meditating on the extract Edward had been reading from his mother's letter. He was inclined to believe with Edward that it must be Mary, and not Matilda, to whom Derwent was become attached; and yet he felt many misgivings; for love, as the

great teacher of it has said, "is a thing full of anxious fears."

He found Lady Branville in her boudoir.

"I heard you had been here and gone out with Edward," she said; "and I was so afraid I should not see you to-day."

"And yet I was sure to come and see you."

"You know how welcome you always are. I am sadly dull, and want you to cheer me. What say you to escorting me out for a canter round the Parks?"

"I should be delighted: but I've no horse, and shall keep you waiting whilst I get one."

"No—I am in no hurry. I do not offer you one of his Lordship's."

"Perhaps he might hardly approve of your riding with me?"

"No matter: I should not ask his leave, only your consent. But most likely he will never know it. We see little of each other, and know less of each other's proceedings. I believe his Lordship is at Windsor with his friend Colonel

O'Tatoe and some other officers. 'Tis two full days since I saw him—*Tant mieux!*"

Mark smiled:—"A pretty sample of high life!"

"As good as one has a right to expect, who marries to connect herself and family to a title, when the affections are elsewhere."

As she spoke these words, Lady Branville sighed deeply, and, withdrawing her large dark eyes from Masborough, cast them on the ground, and stood silent with her hands clasped hardly in each other, and turned round with the palms from her.

One single immense tear fell on her bosom. She started—forced a smile, and passed to the door. Then, recollecting herself, she said:—"You can ride a horse of Charles Chessalette's, which he left at the Horse-Bazaar to be sold. They will let him come if one of our servants goes for him, though they would not trust him to a stranger. I will order him to be brought. If you prefer riding a strange horse in spurs, I will show

you Edward's room, where you will be sure to find a pair. Come. I will take you this way, through my dressing-room and bed-room. It will lead us to the landing at once, without going down the stairs, and up the opposite ones."

Mark followed Lady Branville. In her dressing-room her maid Rosalie happened to be tying up a wreath of artificial flowers.

"Are not these pretty?" said Lady Branville, stopping and holding them to Mark.

Mark admired them much.

"Have you put the button on my habit, Rosalie?" inquired her Ladyship.

"Yes, my lady; do you want it? I left it up stairs in my room."

Lady Branville told her to fetch it; and then, forgetting the errand on which she had brought Mark, sat down on the sofa and began trying on the flowers.

"Do they suit me?" she inquired of Mark.

"Yes," said he; "but you wear them too backward."

"Ah, you are right—you have exquisite taste—I always thought so. Come, put them right for me."

Mark tried to place the wreath a little forwarder.

"There, now. Put some of my hair over it. I think I must turn Rosalie off, and take you for my lady's-maid, you have done it so well. Stop—that curl is always in the way. Do cut it off; there are some scissors."

"Cut it off! Poor thing! what has it done to be severed from its beautiful companions?"

"I must cut it off myself then, unless you will. Do, really—I want it off."

"I am very reluctant."

"I am very positive."

"Really?"

"Really."

"There, then," exclaimed Mark. "I have made a Belinda of you;" and he held up the dissevered ringlet.

Lady Branville took the curl, and looked at it and at Mark.

executioner, when he holds up the h
from the trunk."

"O Lord, how shocking! You
think of poor Hugo; I've been read
rasina' this morning. But if you are
cutioner, you are entitled to a fee;"
saying, Lady Branville folded the dark
small piece of silver paper, and gave it t

In gallantry he could not but kiss
received it; and at that moment, the doo
and Rosalie entering with the habit,
put the treasure into his waistcoat-pock

"Now go, whilst I dress. Rosalie,
Mr. Masborough into my brother's
wants a pair of spurs;—and then c
to me."

Having got a pair of spurs and scre

"I suppose we are ready before our horses," she said; "so how shall I amuse you till they come?"

"Sing me one of those songs you used to sing so brilliantly."

"I'll try—but times are altered. What a fool I am! If I go on in this penseroso strain, I shall frighten you from ever coming near me again. But do you really like music in the morning?"

"Always your's, Lady Branville—"

"Rosa!—I will not sing till you call me Rosa."

"Then, Rosa. By that name so appropriate, I pray you to sing. Evening, I acknowledge, is the true time for music—at least, for music of the touching and sentimental style. The hour harmonizes with it, and the analogies of nature sympathize. The bold *crescendo* of morning, when the day blazes stronger and fuller, makes us too haughty and hardened, in general, to allow us to bend before the enchanting spell. But in the evening, when that day, having passed its pride, is dying down, and the influence of the uncertain

inarticulate poetry' of sweet sound bea
willing and unresisting along its softly n
streams."

"Nay, now that I see you are such
siast, I shall venture even against your t
play before 'day's garish eye.'"

With these words she seated hers
harp, and placed before her some of the
she had been accustomed to sing in fo
at Sileby; but, having turned over the
one or two of them, she put them asi
sigh, and commenced the following son

1.

Oh, remember the hours we spent together,
Youth's own delicious hours!
There was life in the leaves, and balm in th
And gladness in the flowers;

2.

It is not time that has dull'd my heart,
My years have yet been few,
But still the tears from my eyes will start,
The drops my cheeks bedew;
And the roses there
Are not what they were,
When they used to blush for you.

3.

A fatal worm their freshness kills,
That lives within my breast,
Gnaws at my heart, my life's blood chills,
And never is at rest;
'Tis the racking thought
That Love unbought,
Unsold, alone is blest!

The singer's voice trembled as she sung, and it was a relief to both when the servant entered and announced the horses at the door.

They galloped round the Parks, and ever and anon, when they stopped to breathe their horses, they talked of Sileby, and the High Wood, and the hunting; and Lady Branville expressed her hopes that in two days more, they would have poor Sebastian at liberty to gallop with them.

Those hopes, and the animating exercise, brought the roses to her cheeks with their earliest freshness, and the lustre to her eye with its former fire.

"Rosa Sileby is herself again!" she exclaimed, laughing, to Mark.

It was the laugh of but a moment, and a cloud passed upon her features. She was conscious she was Lady Branville.

Mark saw the workings of her soul in the outward and visible signs of her countenance, and to divert her thoughts he made some remark on a group that was approaching them, of whom some were in uniform.

"Good God! It 's Lord Branville. Turn quick—quick," exclaimed his companion, wheeling her horse round and putting him into a full gallop.

Masborough, on the impulse of the moment, was doing the same, when one of the group quickened his pace as if approaching him, and perceiving it was Lord Branville, he pulled in his impatient steed, and waited till he came up.

Lord Branville formally touched his hat, and inquired "if that was Lady Branville who was going away so fast?"

Masborough replied it was, and immediately Lord Branville galloped after her.

Mark hesitated for a moment what to do, and then went in the same direction, but at a much slower pace.

Lord Branville's companions now came up, and Mark found one of them to be an old acquaintance of his, who seemed very glad to see him, and introduced him to his brother officers, Col. O'Tatoe, Captain Hanger, Lieutenant Lightfoot, and Major Mackaw, who, he said, had come from their quarters at Windsor to dine with Lord Branville, where he hoped they were to have the pleasure of seeing Mark.

Lord and Lady Branville had turned back and were now meeting them. Lord Branville introduced Lieutenant Lightfoot to his lady, and added, she knew the rest, and they were coming to dine with them.

Lady Branville said she was happy to hear it,

and then, addressing Mark, she added, "I don't know whether Lord Branville has invited you to join our party, but, of course, we shall be delighted to see you."

Lord Branville affected not to hear what Lady Branville said, and remarked to Captain Hanger that it was a fine day.

Mark had no wish to be one of a party where he knew his company was not desired by the host, and therefore he told Lady Branville she must excuse him from accepting *her* very kind invitation, and that he would now resign the honour of escorting her into other hands. So saying, he took his leave of her and his old acquaintance, and bowing to the other gentlemen, he turned his horse's head in a different direction to the one they were taking.

CHAPTER VII.

THE next morning, Mark sent a note to Edward to beg him to come and breakfast with him, as he should prefer that to joining him in Grosvenor Square. As soon as they had done their breakfast, they called on Edward's father, and all three walked down to visit Sebastian. They found him in great despondency; and much was Mark shocked at his altered appearance. He could not but contrast his bearing with that of Derwent, when he was a prisoner; and the difference between the strong mind and the weak was most apparent. No doubt, the situation of Sebastian was one of greater risk than had been his friend's at Florence; but still, he thought, the feeling of conscious innocence ought to have borne him up, and prevented him from giving way to that utter

prostration of despair, which seemed to numb and obscure his never-active intellects.

His brother Edward endeavoured to rouse and to comfort him. He tried to persuade him how much a manly and quiet demeanour would speak in proof of his innocence. He told him how he was wronging himself and friends, guiltless as he was, by wearing the face of guilt. It was in vain. He was like the bird before the fascinating reptile, that sits helpless and lost, and uses no effort to shun the danger which so becomes inevitable.

From this distressing scene, Mark, finding he could render no useful assistance, took his departure. He went back to Stevens's, and there he found his uncle, just arrived, and very busily employed in reading a long communication which had come that morning from Messrs. Vice, Screw, File, and Pincer.

"How are you, my boy? All well? *Mens sana in corpore sano?* Here, read this, and tell me what you think."

Mark read the papers, which consisted of a

letter from Sir Charles Chessalette's attornies to his uncle's, containing a proposal for a cessation of hostilities upon terms, and of a statement of their own opinion on the subject.

"I differ, sir," said Mark, "from Messrs. Vice, Screw, File, and Pincer, and would give you the advice 'to agree with thine adversary quickly.'"

"But, don't you see, I am on the point of getting by due course of law all that Sir Charles offers, and more. The case was to come on this week, and is now postponed for only a fortnight, and—"

"May be postponed again."

"Well, but, *o mî Marce*, at last it must come to a hearing, and then I am sure of victory."

"So you thought before, and yet you were defeated. Besides, there 's many a slip between—"

"'*Inter calicem supremaque labra*.'"

"And besides, dear sir, even suppose you get a decision in your favour this time, there will then have been one each way,—such is the glorious uncertainty of the law; and do you think Sir

Charles would not appeal to the House of Lords, and keep you in suspense—"

"'*Spemque metumque inter dubius.*'"

"Yes, dubious till the day after doomsday."

"O Mark, thou hast been into the enemy's camp! *inimica Trojæ Castra!*"

"I have, and quarrelled with and cut th Agamemnon, or commander-in-chief! So do look suspiciously upon me as a deserter, a s and a traitor."

"I would not hear thine enemy say so! No, are all right; but pleaseth me not thine advic

"It is sound, though, depend upon it! C sider the terms. Sir Charles agrees to give peaceable possession in six months, law-P ceedings are to cease, each party to pay his O costs, and, though perhaps you might eventu ally get costs from him, yet what to you are a few hundreds laid out in curtailing the 'law's delay,' compared to your 'peace of mind, dearer than all?'"

"Well, perhaps you are right!

'*Cedo equidem, nec, nate, tibi comes ire recuso!*'

We 'll go to Vice and Co.'s, and settle the affair, and on our way you shall tell me how you came to quarrel with Sir Charles."

Off they set, and Mark amused his uncle by his account of the rash disclosure of his politics, and its consequences. Mr. Masborough laughed heartily at his description of Mr. Viper's eloquence, and the family nomenclature of the good-humoured grocer.

"And so the Baronet takes all sorts of fish in his political net? By the bye, Mark, I mean you to oppose him the very next election at L——. So you 'll have another bout at politics with him, unless he has the grace to resign his claim to the seat, when he shall have quitted the neighbourhood."

Mark did not like to hear this proposal, as he had no wish to keep up hostilities with the father of Matilda, which an electioneering contest would be but too certain to have the effect of doing. However, he thought it not prudent to dispute his uncle's inclination at present, when he saw no

prospect of an early dissolution of Parliament, lest in the argument any thing should come out about the daughters. His precaution was, however, vain, as the very next remark of the Squire was—"And pray, Mark, what sort of girls are his daughters? Are they fierce, young, sheer-Tories? Eh?"

"Very nice girls—all three."

"Three there are? Didn't lose your heart—I hope. I must have no Capulets, my boy. Oh, I forgot, you were quite safe—there, at all events, of all places of the globe! Your goddess was there to protect you. Are you as constant as ever?"

"Quite, quite. That is my wife, you know, sir. You said, if you remember, you would never consent to my taking any other wife than the lady there represented."

"Represented? you dog! You are misrepresenting me, I think."

"Don't you remember saying so in the carriage, the morning you were taking me part of the way with her?"

"I remember something of the sort, but not just as you say. I meant the Picture itself."

"Oh, I understood quite differently."

"How could you suppose I meant any thing else, when I believed it, and do believe it, to be a fancy-piece? I suppose, then, you have been on the look-out for the original—perhaps you have made inquiries of the Chessalettes? Why, the knave is blushing!—'*suffunditur ora rubore!*'"

Mark felt greatly relieved by a person's coming up at that instant and shaking his uncle by the hand. The interruption was very seasonable, for he feared the inquiry into *the* PICTURE was coming to a crisis.

The gentleman, who had done him, unconsciously, so good an office, was no other than Mr. Vice himself, the head of the firm to whose office they were going and now had nearly arrived. He turned back with them; and, fortunately, the discussion which ensued gave Mr. Masborough's thoughts another direction, and Mark heard no more at that time of the dangerous subject of the Picture.

The Squire arranged with Mr. Vice to meet the attorney of the opposite party at his office on the following day. Mark excused himself from joining him at the conference, as the trial of Sebastian Sileby was to come on at the same time, in which he took a much greater interest than in any pecuniary matter whatever, whether concerning his uncle or himself.

On their way home Mark felt in a continued state of alarm lest his uncle should revert to the Picture, and he kept him in constant conversation respecting Sebastian Sileby's trial, judging that to be a safer topic than his law-suit, and one less likely to lead, by any allusion or association of ideas, to the female branch of the Chessalettes.

Whilst he was explaining in what manner he suspected Smith had involved the accused in his toils, he was suddenly accosted by a footman in the Branville livery, who said his Lady wished to speak with him, at the same time pointing to her carriage.

He requested his uncle to wait a moment for him, and ran to the carriage-window. Lady

Branville shook his hand, and asked him "if he could spare her his company for a short time, as she had something very particular to say. In fact, she was going to have called for him at his hotel, had she not happened to see him walking with an elderly gentleman."

"My uncle and patron," said Mark.

"Well, your uncle and patron will give you half an hour's leave of absence, and really I do so want a word with you."

Mark said he would get himself excused, and accordingly he told his uncle Lady Branville wanted him.

"Who 's she? Married, I hope? I see I must be vigilant."

"Married! Don't you remember that Miss Sileby, our L—shire belle, married Lord Branville?"

"I 'd forgot. You mean Sebastian Sileby's sister? Ah, poor thing, she must be in an anxious state. Do go to her by all means. No doubt she wants to talk about the trial. She 's a deuced fine girl! Just introduce me, and then I 'll be off.

I should like a nearer view of her, seeing that I am a great admirer of beauty, an '*Elegantium formarum spectator.*'"

Mark took his uncle's arm and introduced him.

"I hope you have agreed to surrender your nephew to me for half an hour, sir?" said Lady Branville with a bewitching smile.

The Squire made a most devout bow, and putting his right hand on his left breast, said, "*Tuus, o regina, quid optes Explorare labor, mihi jussa capessere fas est.*"

The lady smiled again—Mark laughed. The Squire looked as if he did not comprehend the joke, until becoming conscious of his absurdity, he laughed too.

"At six precisely," said the Squire, holding up his finger to Mark.

"I will be with you, sir."

The Squire took off his hat, and remained uncovered till the steps had rolled up, and the fair lady had rolled away, carrying off his nephew by her side.

"And now I am all impatience to hear what

your Ladyship has got to say," said Mark, as they drove off.

"My Ladyship has got to say that she thinks it very unkind of you to be so inattentive to her requests—"

Mark looked surprised, and Lady Branville continued—"as never to call an old friend by the name she loves to hear."

"Forgive me, Rosa, and do relieve my curiosity. Is it about poor Sebastian?"

"No, all will be well with him, I hope; and I feel little anxiety. My news is yet nearer home."

"Indeed!"

"Indeed it is. You must know, Lord Branville was highly incensed at my 'indecorous conduct' in riding out with you. We had very angry words about it yesterday evening, as soon as his visiters were gone."

"I am truly sorry to have caused any—"

"Sorry am not I, except on your account. I am afraid his Lordship may call upon you."

"Be not uneasy; I will answer him."

"I knew you would, and therefore I am uneasy."

"Then cease to be so: be assured, my dear La—Rosa—nay, now, I did remember! Dear Rosa, I promise you he shall receive no harm from me, and—"

"He! It is *you—you* I fear for—only for *you*. For *him*—I wish—what I must not say."

"Lord Branville, I think, can have no right to call me out for riding with you."

"But that is not all. He renewed the subject this morning, and from an insinuation he threw out, I am persuaded my maid Rosalie has been making disclosures. For some time I have plainly perceived a good deal of intimacy and signs passing between him and her. When she dressed my hair, she remarked I had cut off one of my favourite curls; and I caught my Lord's eye scrutinizing my head-dress since."

"At all events, Lady—Rosa—I will avoid a meeting if possible; but you know that I must go out, if directly called upon. You yourself

would despise me, as would all the world, if I did not."

"Oh Heavens! It is all—all my fault! What shall I do?"

"My dear Rosa, you look upon this too seriously. I am persuaded his Lordship will not trouble me; and I only regret that you should suffer."

"Think not of me. To see you, to hear you, is—Don't look at me: I know not what I am saying."

Mark took her hand. "Calm yourself, dear Rosa. You are nervous; and no wonder, considering all your family troubles."

"Kind! kind!" sobbed Lady Branville, turning from him.

Mark felt dreadfully uneasy. He could not mistake his beautiful companion's sentiments towards him, and his position was a difficult, even a dangerous, one. Beauty in distress is a proverbial softener of the heart; and here the distress was incurred for his sake. Mixed with this was a feeling of indignation against Lord Bran-

ville, both on account of his treatment of Rosa, his suspected conduct towards her maid, and his suspicions with regard to himself. From this sense of hostility sprung, not unnaturally, a species of triumph at his own position at the moment and the preference so decidedly shown, and which, it appeared, had been always entertained. But the image of Matilda was as armour to his breast. True it was, the fear of Derwent's successful rivalry kept his bosom from the bounding throb of confident hope; but, on the other hand, though less assured, it did still exist, and would continue to do so, he was conscious, till it should fall before the absolute certainty of her loss.

After a considerable pause, Lady Branville resumed the discourse—"To-morrow, you know, is an eventful day; I trust it will be a happy one to my poor brother. He and Edward will take care of me: or, if he is unable, Edward must alone. I have quite decided on leaving Lord Branville's roof, if he succeeds in convicting Sebastian. I should go back to Sileby, and there

I should sometimes have the happiness of seeing you as Edward's visiter. But as a conviction is, I am persuaded, nearly impossible, I suppose I shall have to continue in my gilded prison. There I cannot see you, I cannot invite you—"

"No, of course, I could not come to be coolly received by his Lordship; nor should I willingly do so, when I know that it would produce unpleasantness between you and him."

"And yet I must see you. Why should I give up the friendship I value so highly on account of his injurious fancies? I will not do it! But, at the same time, I must not expose you to the risk of his endangering your life. It will be his fault if we meet in secret."

Mark's embarrassment was now at its height. Here was a lady involving him in clandestine meetings, for which he had neither inclination nor adequate motive. On the contrary, his affections were elsewhere, and besides, without any consideration for Lord Branville, he was shocked at the idea of the sister of his friend, of a beautiful girl whom he had known the ornament of a once

happy home, of one for whom he had much admiration though no love, of one who had evinced so marked a preference for him, descending from the Parian pedestal of honour to the low level of secrecy, danger, and shame! How to act he knew not. Not to meet her advances he was aware would be a cruel blow to her female pride. He judged it best under all circumstances to adopt the Fabian system of warfare, and delay till he could avoid.

He therefore said, "he trusted she would have her confident augury for the morrow's trial justified by the event. For his own part, he was sorry to say he felt some misgiving. At all events, from her statement he found that that day would decide much of her future course; and, that being the case, he thought it would be better to wait the result, and be guided by it in their arrangements for seeing each other." He then went on to say how grieved he was to find she was so unkindly treated, and how happy Lord Branville ought to have been in the possession of such a treasure.

At these words, Lady Branville gave him a most expressive look, and exclaimed:—"Treasure! none to him! He never had my soul—nor could he have appreciated it if he had; he has none of his own! Rosalie is refined enough for him—the wretch!—Now I will just give you one instance of his taste. We went not long ago with a party to the Opera—Sontag sang like an angel—my friend, Lady Seraphina Thrill, carried away by her feelings, shrieked out, 'Oh ecstacy!' and fainted—and if the unfeeling brute (forgive me for using the only language applicable and expressive enough) did not cry out, quite loud, when all eyes were on Seraphina, 'Oh fiddle-de-dee!' and pretended to faint too!"

"And render no assistance?"

"None! Count Knoutlaionbackski supported her head, and fanned her, whilst he sat laughing. And when the poor dear soul was better, he joked with her in the most unfeeling manner; and said, for his part, he preferred a blind fiddler's 'Drops of brandy;' and the only music which had any 'ecstacy' for him was the pack in full cry; and

finally he wound up the whole by declaring he would get his friend Bill Breakspine to christen his two most hopeful bitches Sontag and Seraphina!"

"There can be no doubt," said Mark, "that Lord Branville better becomes a cover-side than an opera-box."

"We are ill-suited. My spirit is ardent, romantic, enthusiastic. His—but I cannot bear to think of it, or to trust myself to describe it! You are looking at your watch: well, I know I have kept you longer than I engaged to your patron, as you call him, and I suppose you must go."

"I am sorry to say my time is up."

"Heigho! Well, at least I can take you to Stevens's. That will save your time and prolong mine—" here she sighed heavily—"with you."

Lady Branville then told the coachman to drive to Stevens's, where Mark got out. She pressed his hand, and saying, with a trembling voice, "tell him now to go home.—Adieu!"—threw

herself back in the carriage. Mark watched it drive off, and felt greatly relieved as he entered his hotel and joined his uncle, who was waiting for him with his eyes on the time-piece.

CHAPTER VIII.

THERE is a sensation, known perhaps to few, and those of exceedingly irritable nerves and hasty and excitable temperament, an oppressive feeling of Time's having become stationary. When they are waiting in anxiety for some particular event, the idea takes possession of them that the interval can never be got over, and that the appointed period is never to arrive. The schoolboy who thinks it never will be the holidays; the lover, he how is caught by

> " Beauty, that pretty plaything, dear deceit,
> That steals so softly o'er the stripling's heart,
> And gives it a new pulse, unknown before;"—

he thinks the destined day will never come;

these do not analyse their feelings, and it is well for them they do not; if they did, they would find the thought a maddening one.

Mark awoke the following morning before it was daylight. He was in a restless and feverish state. The Squire had compelled him to take a liberal allowance of wine, and he had had an uneasy dream about Derwent and Matilda. He was anxious to ascertain the state of affairs in that quarter, to be relieved from suspense, to know the best or the worst; for, he felt, if Matilda was but true to him, all other difficulties, even his uncle's prejudices, were capable of being surmounted. But before he could urge his inquiries on this point, he was determined to see the result of Sebastian's trial. A few hours only had to roll on, and it would commence; a few more, and it would be over. But in the impatient and excited humour he was in, it seemed as if even the first of the two periods would never arrive. He looked at his watch, looked out of the window, and then threw himself back in his bed, exclaiming, "shall I then have to lie here for ever?"

At length the day began gradually to unfold itself, and the sun arose bright and cheering. "This is a good omen, I hope," said Mark, springing out of bed and putting on his dressing-gown. "Much is to be done ere you go down to your billowy bed, old fellow."

"Old fellow!" said a voice at the door. "Is that the word? Very respectful, truly! Pray how did you know it was me?" cried the Squire, entering.

"You? How could I—how should I know it was *you?* Good morning! you are early."

"'*Tu quoque!*' and, if it was not me, who did you think it was? Who is it that you delight to honour with the title of 'old fellow?'"

"The sun, sir."

"*The* son! Whose son?"

Mark pointed upwards.

"Oh! that sun! Now, if you had but said *Sol*, there would have been no mistake; and pray why do you call him old fellow, may I ask?"

"Is not he old, sir? Old as the hills? Yea, as 'the great globe itself?'"

"Why, so he is, in one sense—but he 's an '*alter et idem*' sort of a fellow. You know we talk of the *new* moon. But to stop this discussion—I 've come up before I 've finished dressing, to call you, and see if you were inclined for a walk in the Park? You know we shall be parted all day—I at Vice and Co.'s, and you in Court, of course."

Mark agreed to the proposal of the walk; and, as he finished his toilet, he thought of the events of the day without any longer feeling that uncomfortable sensation of its not advancing. His uncle and he returned refreshed to breakfast, after which they separated for their respective engagements. Mark went and joined Edward Sileby and his father, and accompanied them to the Court.

In consequence of an accident happening to their coach, they did not arrive till the business of the day had commenced. Sebastian was already in the dock, and the trial of another prisoner was proceeding. They took their seats immediately behind the counsel who was to de-

fend Sebastian, and close to Sebastian himself. His appearance at first bespoke something of resolution, but he had not energy to maintain it. Ere long his senses seemed (to use a vulgar but expressive phrase) "all abroad;" and a skilful physiognomist might have detected in him at once an incapacity to give a full attention to the bearing of the different answers of the witnesses in the case then going forward, and also an absence of abstraction and concentration of thought on the one that was to come after it. However, when a verdict of acquittal was returned, he showed signs of sympathy by a nod and a smile to his brother.

Mark said to Edward, he supposed as a matter of course Lady Branville would not be present? to which Edward replied, "she was waiting at home; but that her footman was in Court ready to take her a message from him the moment Sebastian's trial was over."

Whilst they were yet speaking, the officer of the Court began to arraign Sebastian. His father looked at him for a moment earnestly,

then at the judge, then at the jury; and then, taking out his handkerchief, he buried his face in his hands, resting them on the back of the seat before him.

The first witness called was one of the banker's clerks, who produced the draft, and proved the payment of the nine hundred pounds.

The second witness was Lord Branville. He said the draft was his handwriting, but that he drew it for £600, and that the figure *six* had been changed into a *nine*.

On his cross-examination, he said, "he first discovered the alteration when he looked over his banker's book; it was at an unusual time that he looked over it; and the reason was, that there had been some conversation at a party about people's living within their income: Mr. Smith was present, and had bet him a guinea he had overdrawn his account: to decide this he had referred to his banker's book, and so discovered the item of nine hundred pounds: Mr. Smith was not with him on that occasion."

Mr. Smith was next called. As he entered the

witness-box, he looked very pale. Mark half rose from his seat from a feeling of impatience at the sight of him. Their eyes met. Smith passed his hand over his brow, and then turned, as if in order to face the judge, with his side to Mark.

His evidence was, "that Mr. Sebastian Sileby had requested him to borrow for him six hundred pounds of Lord Branville. Lord Branville, after some demur, in consequence of a quarrel, gave him a cheque for that sum; that cheque he gave to Sebastian Sileby immediately: he passed from Lord Branville's dressing-room, straight through the passage to the breakfast-room, where Sileby was waiting for him: the cheque was not quite dry when he gave it to him; and, on his solemn oath, he had delivered it as he received it, without alteration."

On cross-examination, he said, "he had no ill-will against Sebastian: he had forgotten every thing about a horse called *Belle Sauvage:* on being reminded, he thought it merely a frolic, and had no vindictive feeling. He was sure he went direct from Lord Branville's room down the

passage: he did not go into any room before he got back to the breakfast-room: he passed several doors; none of them led to his room; his room was up stairs: there were two staircases; one beyond Lord Branville's room; the other beyond the breakfast-room: he did not know whether there was ink in any of the lower rooms which he passed: he had no portable ink-stand: the passage was a long one, and not straight: Lord Branville and he had never spoken against Sebastian Sileby: he did not ask Lord Branville for £900; he asked for £600; that was the sum he believed Sileby wanted: he thought he had money left out of a large sum he had lately assisted him in raising: he himself had property in Ireland: his house and estates went by no particular name."

The counsel then asked him in what county and parishes they were situate?

"In Sligo."

"Yes—and the parishes?"

Mr. Smith hesitated, and the counsel for the

prosecution thereupon rose and objected to the question, which he said was totally irrelevant.

The cross-examining counsel said his object was to shake the witness's credit, by showing that he was a person who had passed himself off for what he was not, and had even obtained the hand of a young lady in marriage by false pretences; but the discussion was terminated by Smith's interrupting it, and saying, "he had no objection to name the parishes, which were Cuthra and Lillcoe."

The counsel for the prisoner asked him if he had just recollected the names, or whether they were pure invention? and Mr. Smith said, "I should have answered at once, but that he forgot whether Cuthra was in Sligo, or whether it was not partly in the adjoining county."

The counsel gave him a look of incredulity and contempt, and then called a female witness, who said, "she had been a housemaid at Lord Braville's, but was not then; that on the morning of the day in question she was cleaning Mr. Smith's

bed-room; he came in; and, thinking he was going to stay, she went out; but she had only just got to the bottom of the stairs when he passed her very rapidly: he had a small piece of paper in his hand, which he waved about and blew upon, as if drying it: he went along the passage as if towards the breakfast-room; there were writing materials in every bed-room."

On this woman's cross-examination, it came out, "that she could not speak to within an hour of the time: she returned to Mr. Smith's room shortly, but did not notice the ink-stand: she had been turned away by Lord Branville for telling him a falsehood to screen another servant."

There were then called several witnesses to speak to their opinion and knowledge of the character of the accused. These were gentlemen of the first respectability, who all said, "they had always held him quite incapable of any dishonest or dishonourable action." Amongst the number was Masborough, who, on being asked the same question as the rest, replied—"he is, I am certain, as utterly incapable of falsehood or fraud,

as I am well persuaded the principal witness against him, Smith, is abundantly capable of both."

The judge upon this censured Mark severely, and desired him to confine himself to answering the questions, without going out of his way to blacken the characters of witnesses who might be quite as honest as himself. The prisoner's counsel offered to remonstrate, and say something in vindication of Mark, as that Smith's credibility was in question. The judge angrily ordered the young man not to reply upon the bench.

In his lordship's summing up of the case it was evident he was convinced of Sebastian's guilt; and he pointed out to the jury the absence of sufficient probable motive in Smith to alter the note, and, on the other hand, the benefit the accused would derive. He also showed that the witness called to make out a probability of Smith's having gone to his own room had not met the time, although the circumstance of his having been said to have been seen as it were in the act of drying a paper was

worth their consideration. Finally, he bade them remember that this witness, by her own admission, had been guilty of a falsehood, through which she lost her place; which proved that, however she might excuse it as on behalf of a fellow-servant, there was in her mind a deficiency in the moral principle of veracity. On the whole, if they thought there was a balance of testimony sufficient to cast upon the case any reasonable doubt, he hoped and trusted they would give the prisoner the benefit of it; but, if otherwise, they would discharge their duty to their country and their own consciences, painful as it might be, by finding a verdict accordingly.

The jury retired.

Their return was looked for with breathless interest. An hour elapsed, but still they did not appear. It was a period of most anxious suspense, and to some almost unbearable. There are moments when even the dullest natures are so intensely worked upon, that they approach the sublime of passion. It was so with Mr. Sileby, and an artist might have had such a lesson as

few have the opportunity of meeting with, had one been present when the agonized father, wrought up to the highest pitch of expectation, and at last unable to endure it any longer, regardless of the presence of the judge and the thousand eyes that were on him, started up suddenly from his seat, and, casting a wild look at Smith, and clenching his hands, cried with a clear deliberate tone, "God requite thee for this!" and rushed out of Court. His son Edward followed him. The officers and the crowd made way. Mark's first impulse was to have gone too, but he checked it. He looked at Sebastian's face: he thought he could perceive it written there that Reason wavered on her throne: he felt that his friends should not desert him. As soon as he had seen his father get into a coach, Edward returned; but still the jury did not appear.

Suspense has ever been considered a main ingredient of such tales, poems, and dramas as depend upon their plot. Suspense it is, or the excitement of doubt, and the uncertainty of

winning or losing, that gives to the horse-race, and the prize-fight, and the dice, their intoxicating charm. Interesting is the moment at an election when the poll is almost closed, when the candidates are neck and neck, and lo! a coach is seen afar off crowded with voters! Are they pink or blue? Interesting is it when the House divides on a question which is to decide whether ministers are to go or stay. But what interest can be equal to that of life and death?

At length the jury returned. As they one by one entered the box and took their seats, Mark and Edward with deliberate care scrutinized their countenances. They whispered their speculations to one another, as the officer of the Court called over their names. Did they look like men relieved from the awful burthen of fixing on a fellow-creature the conclusion of guilt,—the fiat of the grave? There was on many an embarrassed air; on the face of one or two a look of satisfaction and ease. Mark, after a rapid but minute survey of the whole twelve, laid his hand

on his neighbour's arm, and said: "Prepare for the worst, Edward."

"No," he replied; "that fat man looks too well pleased."

"He is a fool, who, holding himself safe from temptation to a like risk, on the principle of Lucretius, sees with satisfaction a danger he is not liable to. Besides, he feels he has done a heavy duty—a very unusual thing for him, and is self-satisfied."

"I hope otherwise; and I only think some of them are afraid the judge may remark on their acquitting."

"I wish you may be right—but hush!"

"Gentlemen of the jury," said the officer, "how say you?—Is the prisoner at the bar Sebastian Sileby, guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty."

CHAPTER IX.

In the verdict of the jury the learned judge said he entirely concurred. In his mind there was not a shadow of doubt as to the guilt of the prisoner. He then in a most solemn manner passed on him the extreme sentence of the law, and told him his crime was one unfortunately so common and so subversive of the interests of society, that it was requisite to repress it with the utmost severity—"a severity," he added, "which had been exercised upon parties who had once borne the highest character for respectability, and who had moved in a sphere where such a penalty seemed far remote. But the law was the same to the rich and to the poor;—their station had not saved them

from suffering; and the equality of the law demanded a like example in a like case. The prisoner must not hope for mercy."

During this address Sebastian's face wore a vacant laugh. At its conclusion he was led from the dock; and the learned judge, sucking an orange, desired the gaoler to put up Abraham Brown for stealing a live Muscovy duck, the property of Shadrack Drake, as Mr. Nathaniel Impey, the counsel for the prosecution, was anxious to be set at liberty.

There was some movement of the witnesses and parties in the last case going out of Court, and the witnesses and parties interested in the present one coming in. Amongst the latter was the recovered Muscovite, who, alarmed at the concourse, entered the court with a loud 'quack, quack,' whereupon most of the audience, and several of the junior counsel, who had nothing to do, laughed as heartily, and as evidently without any remnant of sympathy, as if all they had just been hearing had happened a year ago, or had had no shadow of reality in it, but had been only a

play, which was over, and about to be supplied by the farce.

Mark and Edward went round from the Court into the interior of the prison. They found Sebastian in his cell, lying with his face downwards on the ground. The footman, who had been stationed in Court in readiness to convey the tidings of the result to Lady Branville, had followed them, and stood at a little distance. At length he ventured to come forward, and ask if he should go with his message?—"Yes," said Edward.

"Stop," interposed Masborough, and then, turning to Edward, he said, "Would it not be better to take the news yourself? She looks for a different story. You could break it gradually."

"Right," said Edward. "We shall only be allowed a short time here." And then he told the man to wait, and he would himself tell Lady Branville.

"Lady Branville!" exclaimed Sebastian, turning round, and sitting up: "she's my sister. Only think of hanging the brother of a lord and a lady! Is that what you are going to tell her?

Won't she come and see me? Only think—here it is!"

As he said this, he put his hands round his throat, and lifted up his head as if in the act of being hanged. Mark shuddered, and felt so sick that he was obliged to step outside the cell. The gaoler stood there.

"You must not be going in and out, sir. We must lock the door, if you don't stay," said the man.

"I feel ill,—this upsets me," said Mark.

"Very likely, sir. You're not used to it: we are, as the woman said to the eels."

"Good God!" exclaimed Mark, turning away.

"Oh, very well, sir! If your feelings are so fine, I must say you are as well away; whereby I see the allowed time 's up. So, Mr. prisoner's brother, you must come away, too. I must shut up shop now."

"Wretch! Hardened and degraded—"

Mark checked himself, for he thought he was making a foe where he wanted a friend, and added,—"Pardon me, sir, I am a nervous crea-

ture, and very unreasonable. I ought to know you cannot be expected to feel for all. These things are matters of course to you, though new to us. It is a routine affair of business to you,—to us one of near interest. Excuse me, I did you injustice."

"Oh, no offence, sir, I'm sure. I can assure you, I used to feel differently myself at first. I am naturally tender-hearted, but custom,—you know, sir, custom!"

"No doubt,—you must make allowance for me, to whom all this is strange. Might I trespass on your kindness to speak one word more to my unfortunate friend?"

"Oh, by all means," said the gaoler, allowing Mark to pass, who, however, had no other object than to gain a little time for the brothers to finish their interview.

"I'll tell you what my wish is now, Ned," said Sebastian, recovering and exerting himself, "and I'm sure Mr. Masborough will agree with me, it's no use talking of reprieve and Secretaries of State. I shall be hanged, unless—"

"Unless what? Tell me what you would have done, and done it shall be!" exclaimed Edward.

"On your honour?" said Sebastian.

"On my honour!" said Edward.

"Then, Mr. Masborough, please to stand aside, I shall not want to refer to you. Only witness Edward's promise to a dying man."

"I witness it, and will aid him in doing your wishes, to my power," said Mark.

"Tell me, Edward. Do I seem rational and in my senses?"

"Perfectly, now!"

"Because you sometimes, when we've talked, have said otherwise. Mr. Masborough, are you of the same opinion?"

"My dear friend, you seem to me perfectly rational, and, I may say, collected."

"I see. I seemed different before the trial and at it. But that judge was such a horrid old fool, to believe that scoundrel,—it tried my patience. Well, if I'm rational, your promise is binding. Save yourself, Edward, the disgrace,

save all of us, save me, the disgrace of the scaffold!"

"I wish I may be able. I will memorialize."

"Trash! If you don't wish to see me so—" here he again put his hand round his throat—"bring me Prussic acid."

Mark, who had stepped aside when Sebastian requested him to do so, but had again come forward on his continuing to address him, as well as his brother, started. Edward looked towards the door.

"Come, gentlemen," said the gaoler. "Really, I can't stay. I must go to the debtor's yard. Their walking time is come."

"I'll think of it," said Edward to his brother.

"Bring it," cried Sebastian with great vehemence; and then after a pause he added,—"or I would rather not see you again."

The gaoler came in, and, as Mark and Edward shook the prisoner by the hand, he almost pushed them out, and straightway locked and chained the door.

As soon as they got into the open air, Edw

pressing Mark's arm, said, "Masborough, before you advise me how to begin with Rosa,—ay, and there's writing to my poor mother, too!—first of all tell me, can I do what Sib asks?"

"You cannot."

"But the disgrace—"

"Is awful—the long suffering to your brother, awful! Yet *you* cannot help to kill him."

"He must die. I see no hope," said Edward.

"Nor I, Edward. Use every effort; petition for mercy; do all you can. At last, if he must die, *I* well help him to shorten his torture, and escape the last degradation."

"'Thank you, 'thank you! This is being a friend in need."

"I own I shall rate my service highly myself: for, besides the penal nature of the transaction, I can scarce reconcile it to my conscience; in fact, it will be an act of *feeling*. People will blame me; but it will be doing as I would be done by; and I would rather be wrong on those principles, than right on colder ones."

"It is a fearful alternative, Masborough!"

"It is! and a cruel kindness that I have to show your unhappy brother. I will buy the fatal liquid at once; but do not tell him I have done so till every hope of reprieve is exhausted. Executions, you know, are not so speedy, when not for murder; and we shall have time to reconsider this case of conscience. I should like to speak to Derwent about it; he is so sure to be right."

"I know how you swear by him, and yet many of our friends have I heard say they would take your judgment as soon as his, he is so eccentric."

"They are wrong."

"What an enthusiastic you are in all things! I can especially appreciate your friendship for Derwent now, when you are half-inclined to think he is supplanting you in a certain quarter."

"I blame him not, I never confided my secret to him."

"But do you think he must not have guessed it or learnt it ere this?"

"Perhaps,—but I will not condemn him unheard. Ought not you to have turned there?"

"No; I will go first to my father, and the

Rosa. My letter to my poor mother last—for I dread it more than all! I will call on you at five o'clock, and tell you how my father and Rosa bear the tidings. My sister talked of parting from Lord Branville; but she must stay till we have got him to join in a petition for mercy. If that fails, I hope we shall go and live abroad."

The friends here separated. Edward went on his painful missions, and Mark entered a chemist's shop. Having procured a small phial of the deadly acid, he returned to Stevens's. His uncle was not yet come in from the meeting at his attornies', but he arrived soon after.

"Well, it's all right, Mark," he exclaimed. "But, '*proh Deûm atque hominum fidem!*' what 's the matter? Your face—Good God! Is the trial over?"

Mark shook his head.

"Ah," said the Squire, "I was so full of my own affairs, I never thought of you and your friends. I need not ask the result?"

"Sebastian Sileby is convicted."

"Surely he will not be executed!"

"We shall do all we yet can, sir, to save him, —but I fear it will be in vain. You know the old fallacy, 'if Dr. Dodd is spared, the Perreaus were murdered!'—which, to my view, is justifying one murder by another."

"If it is a murder, that's all. Forgery is a grievous thing though, Mark."

"Bad, no doubt, at the best it is. But this would not have been a very bad one, had it been one at all; which, I am fully persuaded, as fully after the trial as before it, that it was not."

"Did the judge seem dissatisfied with the verdict."

"He did not; but he's wrong."

"Nevertheless, I would rather have his opinion than your's. You are interested; he is not. You are young, very young, Mark; he, old, and much experienced in these things. I am afraid your friend, notwithstanding your good opinion of him, is guilty."

"He is not; you wrong him. You—"

"Gently, gently. Don't put yourself into a

passion. Passion is no argument: on the contrary, *Ira furor brevis est.* Don't you recollect a passage in Plato on this subject?"

"No, I don't. I never read Plato."

"More's the pity, Mark: I hope you will ere long. We will read him together, if you like, some time or other at Rotherington—(which is to be mine again safe and sure, in a parenthesis). You'll find in his Euthyphro a passage which I won't quote to you, though I could, in the original; but to give you an extempore translation, it is to the following effect:—'Now if I and you should differ about a number, whether it is more or less, would a difference about such a point cause us to be enemies, or to be angry with one another? or, should we not begin reckoning, and soon settle the matter?' Just apply this. I wish your friend may be innocent. You ought to allow me to think the decision of a learned judge, and of twelve impartial men, *primâ facie*, more likely to be right than yours. Now, to upset this opinion of mine, do you quietly state to me

your arguments in favour of your friend, and explain to me how you think the jury were led to an erroneous conclusion."

"My dear uncle, I acknowledge my error in being so warm. I will do as you bid me,—just state my reasons. In the first place, I own I begin with a conviction of my friend's innocence, and I require strong proof to supersede this. Now, what proof have I? Lord Branville's evidence I lay out of the question; for he only says the draft was altered, as I believe it was. The banker the like, for the like reason. That scoundrel Smith remains then the only witness. It was said he gained nothing by the forgery: he has gained his rival's removal, he has gained his rich wife, and, dearer, his revenge! Are self-interest, fortune, and vengeance, no motives with such a character? Then, what would Sebastian gain by the forgery? Three hundred pounds, which, take notice, he could have had for asking for; for Lord Branville would as soon have lent him nine hundred as six, no doubt. And would he peril his neck to cheat the person who befriended him out of such a sum? Then again the

circumstance of the banker's-book being inspected at that unusual time, and in consequence of Smith's wager, is to me very suspicious and redolent of contrivance. Lastly, the maid's testimony not only shows that Smith had the opportunity of altering the draft, but also it is a positive contradiction to part of his evidence, which was introduced as material, viz., his going at once from his Lordship to Sebastian."

"'*Quid facundia possit, Re patuit,*' O Mark!" rejoined the Squire: "I commend your argument, and must say you make a strong case for your friend. I suspect, however, you have not stated the facts fairly and fully. You may have told the truth and nothing but the truth, but have you told me the whole truth?"

"Why, certainly, sir, I have omitted one little circumstance; namely, that the servant-maid had told some bit of a white lie once upon a time."

"What was the lie, Mark?"

"It was not exactly stated, but it could not be a bad one: it was merely to screen a fellow-servant, and for no advantage to herself."

"How do you know that? Might she not

screen her fellow-servant in order that he or she might, when the turn came, screen her? Might it not be one who had been her ally in cheating her master, that she was screening? But there are many, many supposable motives! Go to, Mark. If a lie is told with a bad motive, (and few are told with good ones,) it is not very white. But, put on your hat; a turn will do us good, and I can finish my homily on lies in the street; and I think I shall convince you that all are about equally bad, the small lies making up for their want of size by the generally paltry and contemptible nature of their motive, which supplies no excuse like a good fat lie, that is for the most part begotten by a motive of like dimensions!"

After discussing the subject of lies at some length, Mr. Masborough reverted to Mark's argument, and he said he thought it sufficiently good to deserve the attention of the Secretary of State. He therefore recommended him to state it in writing with great care; and this Masborough resolved to set about in the evening in his own room.

The Squire then told him all the particulars of his arrangement with Sir Charles Chessalette, and that he was to be restored to the possession of Rotherington in a few months. The Baronet's son had joined in the covenant, and the whole was definite and straightforward. "Sir Charles," he continued, "made some demur about depositing a sum of money with my attornies as security for the fulfilment, as he said he was in want of a little ready money to portion a daughter of his who is to be married as soon as he gets back."

"Married! a daughter—which? who? what? why? when?" exclaimed Mark.

"Which! who! what! why! why, what's all this to you? You don't care about the girl. If, Mark—what—what do you mean?"

"Only," said Mark, "I thought it might be to a friend of mine."

"Oh, that's all!" said the Squire. "The warmth of your friendship really quite alarmed me. I begun to think I don't know what. But I breathe again. Let me see if I can answer all

your categories !—Which ? I don't know which.—Who ? A Mr. Darwin, I think. Is that your friend's name ? "

" Derwent, sir ? "

" Ay, Derwent or Darwin, it 's all the same ; what 's in a name ? Next comes, What ? Answer, going to be married. Why ? Because she wants a husband, I suppose, '*tempestiva viro*,' ay ? When ? As soon as her papa gets back to give her away. Doubtless, she is crying, ' why tarry his chariot-wheels ? ' These, I think, were all your interrogatories, Mr. Mark ? "

" All, sir. Derwent was a great friend of mine at Cambridge, and I wonder you have not heard me talk of him. I used to call him my Mentor."

" Indeed ! Then I suppose you considered him very wise and clever ? "

" Very, indeed ! "

" Well, then, all I can say is, either you were a bad judge, or he is altered, or else I must add, '*Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit.*' "

" For marrying ? "

"They are, and therefore my
the more."

"No doubt, sir," said Mark, w
his uncle, and thinking it a good
try the ground a little—"no d
know, sir, you make exceptions,
enlightened are your views. You
for instance, though you disap
father."

"'*Fortes creantur fortibus et b*
truly says. It is a great thing to
stock; and the few, of whom I
who are good when their parent
great merit. When I put a walnu
I look to have a fruit-tree in the
but if I sow only the berries of

such as you are, are the exceptions. Now it is against all logic to infer a general from a particular, or to draw a rule from an exception. People say, 'the exception proves the rule;' and so it does—to exist. It does not prove what the rule is, but it proves that there is a rule from which to except — exception being a relative term."

"I neither want a logician nor a conjuror to tell me this," said Mark.

"You are vastly impertinent to-day, my dear boy. You half rouse my suspicions that these misses are not indifferent to you—and if I believed you dared care for, much more regard or think of—But, no! you cannot be such a traitor!"

"My dear uncle, it is Derwent, my friend Derwent, who, you told me, is going to be married—not I. You did not tell me *I* was going to be married, you know."

"Then you mean to say it 's all right, and I 'm only fighting a shadow, a phantom of my own fancy? Well, I am glad of that."

"Derwent is going to marry one of the daughters," said Mark aloud; but, as if musing, "of a man who has had a law-suit with my uncle. Do you think, sir, I ought to cut him for this connexion?"

"Oh, by no means; why should you? He does not marry the father!"

"No more he does!" rejoined Mark. "No more he does! I may therefore continue to regard him. I dare say he will be happy: from all I have heard and seen, the young ladies are very amiable, accomplished, and beautiful. Happy Derwent!"

"You seem, Mark, to have great pleasure in praising. The theme is grateful, '*laudumque immensa cupido.*'"

"You know I saw a great deal of them when I went to Rotherington, not knowing you were gone. By the bye, I suppose you and the Baronet hardly met on such easy terms as to talk of that mistake of mine?"

"We talked of nothing but the matter before us and general topics—one only excepted. There-

fore your illustrious self was not brought on the tapis. However, that one topic did certainly concern you: — Sir Charles said, towards the conclusion of our interview, he 'hoped I would engage not to exert the influence my possessing Rotherington would give me at the next election for L——.'"

"And what did you say, sir?"

"Why, I did say, sir, I most assuredly should. I gave him plainly to understand that I should make the most of my influence, inasmuch as our politics are diametrically opposed."

"And he said?"

"Nothing. But, if I have any skill in physiognomy, he brewed some plot; for there was about him for a moment, after my declaration, a perplexed look; then his brow cleared, he wore a slight smile, and he turned the conversation not very artificially."

"Let us, if you please, turn homewards," said Mark. "Edward Sileby promised to call at Stevens's at five o'clock, to tell me how his

you are a bit of a favourite of

prefer your having a small h
with a married woman, who, h
already, will not put me in je
you. — None of your misses —
traps!"

"Very moral advice, truly!
whether you are indebted t
edu—"

"Hold your saucy tongue, *mî*
not preach immorality. Do yo
I would not have you go beyond
lengths — you know, — '*sunt c*
Quos ultra citraque nequit consist

"Now, uncle, I put it to you
to be the husband of a flirtin
never go wisely?"

Mark was glad enough to keep his uncle on this new subject, as he had begun to be afraid, if he further pursued the other, it might end in his proposing to extract from him some Hannibal's vow of perpetual enmity to the house of Chessalette.

They found Edward Sileby waiting for Mark. He told him his father had received the news quite quietly, having left the Court with a full expectation of the result. Very different had it been with Lady Branville:—she had repeatedly fainted; and in the intervals of the fits she had in the most unchecked and unmeasured terms spoken her mind of the conduct of her Lord. In writing to his mother, he had tempered the truth with a mixture of hopes of a reprieve which he was far from feeling.

When he had related to Masborough his different proceedings, he returned to his sister. In his presence she asked and obtained from her husband a promise to recommend her brother to mercy.

That evening Mark drew up his memorial in favour of Sebastian, and showed it to his uncle. The following morning when Edward called, it was submitted to his consideration; and, as he approved of it too, he accompanied Mark to present it to the Secretary of State. The next day they received an answer, saying, "the sentence should not be carried into execution till the Secretary had had an interview with the learned Judge who presided at the trial, and if he thought there was sufficient weight in the arguments adduced to warrant delay, in order to any further inquiries being made, it should be granted."

With this assurance the friends were obliged to rest satisfied, and they employed the interval in

making such inquiries among the servants of Lord Branville as they hoped might lead to some confirmation of the female witness—but without success.

The time was rolling on—the fatal day drawing near. To the prosecutor's recommendation to mercy an answer had been received, saying, "that the offence was one to which a pardon could not be granted consistently with former cases."

Mrs. Sileby arrived in town, the very shadow of her former self. She had set off the day she received her son's letter, informing her of the sad story of his brother's condemnation. Amidst all her affliction and agony, which were truly severe, truly maternal, the ruling passion was still strong, and she could not help telling the news of the wedding about to take place between Mr. Derwent and Miss Chessalette. Nor was Edward too entirely absorbed in grief at his brother's suffering and his family's disgrace to omit sending off a note to Mark, to assure him positively that the bride elect was Mary, and not Matilda.

In a day or two the new-married couple themselves appeared—but they were only birds of passage, and were not staying in London; and well was it for them that it was so arranged, for they would have found themselves amongst friends who had far other occupation than sympathy with their joy. There was time, however, for Mark to spend a long day in their company. Whilst Derwent was occupied with his lawyer and other business, he escorted the bride about the town, and during their drive he learnt from her many particulars of no little interest. Amongst others, she told him that it was her youngest sister, Jane, who had put the ring on his finger in his sleep, Mrs. Sileby having, with some difficulty, persuaded her to do so, in order, as she said, to assist in bringing about a consummation which both Matilda and Mark had told her was devoutly to be wished. "Now Matilda," the bride continued, "I know from herself, never told Mrs. Sileby any thing of the kind, though the good lady chose so to interpret some casual expression she made use of in speaking of you; and I can assure you Matilda has felt very un-

comfortable ever since you went away, as she happened to be on the leads the morning of your departure, by mere accident, and she was afraid you would think she was interested in watching you drive away. Not that I mean to say she was not—for, having seen plainly enough your regard for her, I will not conceal that I believe it is returned."

Mark was of course highly delighted with this intelligence from such good authority; and his spirits were for the time too buoyant to allow him to cast a thought upon Sebastian or any thing gloomy.

In the evening, after dinner, he had a long and confidential conversation with the bridegroom. He told him the tribulation he had been in at his suspected rivalry; and Derwent, in return, assured him he had all along been quite convinced, even when they were at Florence, that he had fixed his hopes on Matilda. "Therefore," he added, "you may be sure I would have run away rather than have attempted to rival you; but I hope you will agree in thinking,

(as I used to do, when I was pursuing my love-affair with Mary, and keeping it a most profound secret, in order to enjoy the surprise our marriage would occasion you,) that there is no harm in our bonds of friendship being tightened, as I trust they may be by your union with Matilda, into brotherhood; and perhaps I, too, may be of some avail in reconciling you to my father-in-law, whom I find your politics have seriously offended. Having received a hint from Charles, I broke my politics to him gradually, and succeeded in obtaining toleration and favour. You, as I told him one day when we were talking in a confidential manner, though, like myself, a little on what he considered the wrong side in that one respect, were an excellent youth of good expectations; and I ventured to go so far as to say, that I should like to see family feuds put an end to by your union with Matilda, whom I knew you admired."

"And what said he? How did he take it?"

"He took a pinch of snuff, and said, 'I admire his taste, and I wish he may get it!' I

said no more at the time; but he evidently had not forgotten the subject, for he told me a day or two afterwards that he felt conscious he had behaved too cavalierly towards you, and inquired what I thought would be your income?"

"And what did you say?"

"I said, ten thousand a year at least, eventually! He again took a pinch of snuff, and again said, 'I wish he may get it!'— but, upon making a calculation of what you would have from your uncle, he came to the conclusion that I had not much over-rated the amount; and, as he made that remark, he fixed his eye on his daughter, rubbed his leg, and seemed more like a thinking being than I ever had seen him."

Mark said he would castle-build on this, for want of better ground; and then, turning the conversation, he told Derwent, with injunctions to the most faithful secrecy, the request of Sebastian to be supplied with the means of escaping the last public disgrace of execution, and asked his opinion and advice. Derwent replied: "The only principle on which I could think of attempt-



in every case, that I should he
defeat, evade, or counteract th
whatever."

"I must one moment interru
'in every case;' now, surely
for blood—"

"I know all you would say,
heard the exception you make
generally sound views and me
In fact, it is to that mercifu
that their error (as I consider
asmuch as so great is their
that to mark their sense o
another."

"Surely you confound term
tion is very different to a mu

discourse: "I am glad to hear you say so. The true way to argue, when you argue for the purpose of arriving at truth, is to listen: when the other side has done, then answer and object; and then let him reply. In this way you may come to a conclusion, which you never can do if you are to be ever running off the road in digressions. Let me go on; but, first, I will sanction my argument by a high authority—no other than our amiable and distinguished Laureate, Southey, who has in the third act of his Wat Tyler the following speech, which he puts into the mouth of John Ball:—

'Justice can never link with cruelty.
Is there among the catalogue of crimes
A sin so black that only death can expiate?
Will Reason never rouse her from her slumbers,
And, darting through the veil her eagle eye,
See in the sable garment of the law
Revenge conceal'd? This high-priest has been haughty,—
He has oppress'd his vassals: tell me, Piers,
Does his death remedy the ills he caused?
Were it not better to repress his power
Of doing wrong—that so his future life
Might expiate the evils of the past,
And benefit mankind?'

necessities of society require th
and that, as all men are boun
compact, each man has tacitly ag
life under this tenure. To take t
of this section first, I know the
say no man has a right to commit
If he has not himself a right ov
how can he give such right to c
he delegate what himself has
necessities of society do not
should, if indeed the necessities c
another phrase for the incompe
lators. The necessities of society
vention of crime. Now, if that
attained by the extinction of the
the best way would be to des

offence, otherwise the culprit becomes a martyr. Make him an example, then; show him cut off from liberty, working his atonement in bonds, in toil, in disgrace. But do not waste your example by using it all up at once, as you do by killing. But it is said, this or that crime is getting so common that there must be a striking example. Now what is this but administering justice by the chapter of accidents? A man is caught horse-stealing: read the county newspaper. Have there been ten horses stolen in ten weeks? Yes—hang him! No, only five—then, hang it, don't hang him, only transport him!

"But, is his offence not horse-stealing, only stealing from a bleaching-ground? Things are *so* exposed in a bleaching-ground! No doubt: hang him, therefore, since the bleachers cannot be always on the watch, and it is expensive to build high walls with spikes and broken glass on the top. Shall I deign to answer the argument of *uniformity*, which said, 'if Dr. Dodd were pardoned, the Perreaus were murdered?'

"What is this but justifying one wrong by ano-



be infinite; but if the first
second will be right; and.
reasons and proofs of its t
necessity for referring to the
dent. It is commonly admit
infallible—equally that he c
Is not then this irrevocable
presumptuous? Suppose an in
suspicious appearances and
dence—"

"Sebastian's case!" exclai

"N. or M., as the case n
Derwent, "or Sebastian, if
such a one wrongfully convic
The world is not just enough
upon the family as though all

"Nay," said Masborough, "I have myself always been of similar sentiments as to capital punishments, except only in the case of murder; and now when I see Sileby about to suffer, to be cut off in the pride of his days by an ignominious and painful death, I feel the weight of your last argument."

"Ay, Masborough, so it is! We can perceive a wrong when ourselves suffer. But I ought not to break the law of debate laid down by myself. Go on."

"Not now," said Mark; "we will adjourn the discussion, and I will reflect on what has fallen from you. At present I want to show you a copy of the Memorial I have sent to the Secretary of State, not arguing on the amount of punishment, but on the probability of the prisoner's innocence."

Derwent read the document, and said he so much approved of it that he felt inclined for his own part to waver in the opinion he had entertained of Sebastian's guilt, and he recommended



had promised to speak a go
when she wrote to Matilda.
sired his friend not to fail to
ticulars of Sebastian, in whos
lively interest.

Mark did not neglect to s
memorial to the Judge; to w
short answer, saying, ' that if
serve the convict, instead of w
evidence, he had better find sc
A communication also arrived
of State to Edward Sileby, in
unless by a certain day there s
fact proveable, the warrant woul
the sentence on his brother i
learned Judge saw no reason to

cipating the last disgrace of the gallows was anxiously debated. Masborough felt great misgivings, and especially the idea pressed upon him of there being a possibility, bare and remote as he thought it, of something happening at the last moment. What would be his feelings, suppose a reprieve should come between the taking of the deadly draught and the time for the execution! He hesitated so much, that at length Edward resolved to take the responsibility upon himself. It was for *his* brother, *his* family, *himself*, that this doubtful act was to be done—why should he throw the onus upon his friend?

Reluctantly Mark surrendered the fatal phial, which Edward determined to keep, and not to give up to Sebastian till the last moment.

Mrs. Sileby in the mean time had taken for her husband and herself a small furnished house. This circumstance afforded Edward a favourable opportunity, in the excuse it gave him of being with his mother, to leave Lord Branville's house, with whom he felt on most uncomfortable terms, but with whom he did not wish to come to an

open rupture at present. He took up his abode therefore with her and his father.

Mrs. Sileby daily visited her unhappy son, whose haggard face and shrunk frame bespoke the bitter agony of fear which continually oppressed him. In vain did she strive to inspire him with the hope to which she still clung. Equally vain were his brother's exhortations to rouse himself to a manly firmness.

It chanced that a sudden thought struck Masborough one morning as he and Edward were coming out of the prison. He happened to overhear high words pass between the governor of the gaol and his chief assistant. The origin of the dispute he did not catch, but the words, "I'll tell you what, Loraine, if you ever repeat this conduct, I shall dismiss you;" and the retort, "you dismiss, indeed!" were sufficient to show him there was a house divided against itself. He made a point of noting well the person of the assistant, who was the Loraine so addressed, and he was so fortunate as to see him shortly afterwards leave the prison. Mark desired Edward to excuse him

for a short time, and promised to meet him at his hotel in an hour. He then went out, and soon overtook the person he was pursuing. Loraine, who knew him well by sight from his frequent visits to Sebastian, touched his hat.

"So you are taking a walk?" said Mark.

"Yes, sir. I am going shopping for the prisoners. It is pleasant to get out of the walls now and then."

"It is. Your life is one of much confinement."

"A hard life, and poorish pay, sir."

"And not made more agreeable by your governor, I should think; at least, if I may guess from the manner in which I heard him speaking to you."

Mark had now touched the string he wished. The man stopped. "You heard him, sir? He 's a tyrant. He forgets that I am not a prisoner any more than himself."

"If he behaves so to you, friend," said Mark, "I suppose he is rough enough to those poor fellows?"

"A downright savage!"

"Altogether, I dare say you don't find yours a very comfortable situation?"

"I should be glad of any other. I don't deal in force and fetters for choice."

Mark surveyed his companion with a careful and scrutinizing eye: at length he said: "You will think what I am about to say rather strange, but I feel I can trust you. I am going to throw myself into your hands, my friend."

Loraine looked surprised.

"Hear me out before you answer me," continued Mark. "It shall rest with yourself to be independent for life, and to earn that advantage by an act of humanity and justice. I have a proposal to make to you. Might I ask what is your salary?"

"Only eighty pounds a-year!" replied Loraine.

"You shall have a sum that shall produce you more than three eighties a year, if you will accede to my proposition. And, believe me, I would not presume to make you the offer if I could not at the same time assure you that it is accompanied with no wrong, except in appearances. Will five

thousand pounds induce you to prevent a great crime?"

"Much less would! Five thousand would, I fear, almost induce me to commit one."

Masborough smiled, and proceeded. "There is a prisoner in your keeping who is to suffer for a crime he is not guilty of."

"Mr. Sileby?" interrupted Loraine. "I fear, sir, your friendship misleads you."

"That he has been convicted, I know and admit: but I know that he is innocent. If I can satisfy you of his innocence—"

"Excuse me, sir—you had better satisfy those who can save him."

"You can!" said Mark. "If I can satisfy *you*, it is enough. Let him escape; let him fly to America. Before you stir a step in the business, the sum I have named shall be in your hands. You can go to America too, taking with you to the land of liberty the means of independence."

"I'll tell you what, sir," said Loraine: "I know you are a gentleman, and a friend of Mr. Sileby's, and therefore I believe you in earnest. I

will not give you the trouble of trying to show the gentleman's innocence, which I'm afraid you would find not too easy. But I'll tell you what it is. It's a hard matter to hang a young man for altering a figure, when he has been led into indiscretions. I'll do what you say, if I can. Then fly I must, and of course the money will be necessary."

"You shall have it to-morrow, my friend, depend upon it. Relays of horses shall be ready for you and him all the way to Liverpool. I will myself be there with boat and intelligence."

"All ships will be searched. That plan will not do; I'll tell you of a better. Procure some female dresses, and Mr. Sileby and I shall be much safer like two old women, lodging in a garret in the recesses of St. Giles's for some time. I've seen something of life in my younger days; nor was I always—but regrets and retrospects are all vanity."

The two were silent, and walked up and down for a time, each meditating on their daring scheme. At length Loraine renewed the dis-

course: "I'm thinking, where can we change our dress?"

"It would depend a little on the time of your escape," said Masborough.

"What I propose to do, is this," said Loraine. "The governor has the keys deposited in his bed-room every night at ten o'clock. He generally sits up till about eleven. Now in the interval I must possess myself of such as are necessary,—namely, the key of Mr. Sileby's cell, and those of the inner wall door, and the outer door, and we must be out before he goes to bed, when he would miss them."

"But would he not miss them too soon for you to be clear off, if you proceed as you say?"

"The time would be short, no doubt. However, this plan I will try, if none better occurs. Have the dresses ready, as perhaps I may manage it to-night."

"But the money will not be ready, I fear," said Masborough.

"I will trust you," replied Loraine.

"'Thank you for your good opinion, my friend,"

said Mark, shaking the man's hand. "The money I know I shall get easily, but the dresses I shall have some difficulty in procuring, so as to leave no traces of our movements."

"That I must leave to you," said Loraine. "Now give me accurately the number and situation of Mrs. Sileby's house. You and Mr. Edward must be in readiness to receive us there. Only think what a day brings forth! This morning, when I unlocked the cells, I little dreamt that ere night I should be doing what would entitle me to be the occupier of one myself."

Masborough encouraged him as well as he could by showing the chances of escape. And after telling him to knock at a side window of Mrs. Sileby's house, which happened to be at the corner of a street, and making such arrangements as the uncertainty of the turn their plot might take allowed, he parted from him for the present.

Mark was greatly pleased with the success of the first part of his scheme, the procuring so useful and material a confederate. The intense interest he took in the fate of Sebastian was not

owing to friendship, for he had hardly felt any for him at all till he saw him an object of pity; but to his acute sense of justice, which would not let him see a young man, of whose innocence he was fully and firmly convinced, put to death without his using every effort in his power, and all means of all kinds to save him. He returned to his hotel, where he hoped to see his uncle, and where he had appointed to meet Edward. The latter he would want to assist him in receiving the fugitives at his mother's house, and in getting them off again in their disguises. To the former he trusted for raising the large sum he had promised Loraine, and he thought his influence would be sufficient for him to obtain it without being obliged to explain in what way he meant to dispose of it. Should his uncle decline advancing it without such explanation, as he knew he would not assist in an act which to him would look like defeating justice, he resolved not to confide his intentions to him, but to raise the money from the same Jew that had formerly dealt with Sebastian, or from some other of the

race that from the time when they spoiled the Egyptians have plundered the Gentiles; and this he knew he should be able to do, on depositing the deeds securing his rent-charge, and, if necessary, on Edward's joining in the security.

He was much annoyed at finding the one gone out, and the other not come yet. His time was precious, and the delay might prevent his procuring the disguises till it was too late.

In the midst of his anxiety, Lady Branville's carriage drove up to the door, and her footman brought a message, to say his Lady wished to speak to Mr. Masborough.

As soon as Mark got to the carriage-door, Lady Branville inquired if Edward was there. Mark told her he was expecting him. "I want to see him," said her Ladyship: "I have promised not to leave Lord Branville's roof till the time he appoints.—I wish to go now, and put myself under my mother's protection."

As she spoke these words, Lady Branville looked very much agitated.

"Let me ask you to remain only two days more where you are," said Mark, seeing at once that this movement might possibly interfere with his designs.

"Why should *you* desire it? My proceedings have no interest for you," sighed the lady.

"I have no right to controul you; but, if you knew all my motives, Lady Branville, I am sure you would think me justified in my request."

"I am too much out of spirits to scold you for calling me that name. Get into the carriage for a few minutes, and tell me what you mean."

"I must not," said Mark. "I should perhaps miss your brother."

"We will only drive up and down the street in sight of the hotel," said her Ladyship. "Come, you may venture; I am not in a humour to make love to you to-day."

A faint smile passed over her features as she said this, but Mark remained unmoved.

"Let me for once, Rosa," said Mark, "beg

you to rely on my advice. My reason is such as you would approve of; it concerns you."

"I promise to do what you ask. You called me Rosa, and by that name I will never refuse you any request—any in the world. But give Edward a message for me, in case I do not meet him on my way to poor Sebastian. Tell him Lord Branville has left me and gone into the country, to Renstone, without giving me any notice, or even saying 'good-bye.'"

"He is well away," said Mark.

"Yes, I can spare him; but I regret I have allowed him to steal a march on me; *I* wished to have left *him*. You remember Rosalie, my maid?"

"Yes, you thought her a spy."

"I have no doubt she was. She left me yesterday, abruptly. I have reason to think she is gone to fulfil a different office to that of spy, in Lord Branville's establishment at Renstone."

Lady Branville coloured as she spoke these words. Masborough hesitated what to say; and

the Lady added, "Well, tell Edward he will find only me at home. I will not hinder you any more now."

The carriage drove off. Mark turned to go into the hotel, and at the same moment he saw the Squire approaching.

CHAPTER XI.

"I HAVE a great favour to beg of you, sir," said Mark, following his uncle into the house.

"What may it be, *mî Marce?*"

"It is a great and extraordinary one. I am almost afraid to name it."

"Don't be afraid, Mark. I am sure there is nothing in my power that I would refuse you, except only my consent to your imitating Mr. Derwent, and marrying a Chessalette. Ask away; I know you will not ask any thing improper."

"It is a money-matter, sir."

"Then I am not afraid! As the *Sun* said to *his son*,—you remember the story of Phaeton in Ovid, Mark?—

'quodvis pete munus, ut illud
Me tribuente feras. Promissis testis adesto
Dis juranda palus, oculis incognita nostris.'"

Mark smiled a moment at this effusion, and then rapidly resuming the gravity of look which bespoke the interest he felt in having his petition granted, he said, "The sum I have to beg of you is very large, and when I at the same time express a hope that you will trust me so far as not to question me as to the application of it, I am in truth afraid to name it."

"Oh, don't be shy. Rush '*in medias res*' at once. I know your allowance is small, and you know I like to make you a present extra now and then. Have not I sworn by the Styx, an oath awful to the gods,—

'*Di cujus jurare timent et fallere numen?*'

Come, is it a few hundreds?"

"Five thousand."

"Wheugh! That is rather strong. Five thousand?"

"I know, sir, the sum is large, and I told you I was afraid to ask it."

"Why, man, surely you don't want to make a settlement on an opera-dancer? '*Dedecorum pre-*

tiosus emptor,' ay? Or, have you been at the dice, like young Sileby?"

"Neither, sir. I will promise to tell you some day or other how I have employed your money."

"Well, Mark, you shall have it. Secrecy has in general a bad look with it, but you are a good lad, and I can trust you for not misapplying the money, '*tali ingenio præditum*;' besides, it would be yours some day, when I'm gathered. Here's my key; you'll find my cheque-book in the drawer of my desk in my bed-room." Mark brought the book; the cheque was drawn, and he put it into his pocket with many thanks.

"Say no more about it, my boy. As I've said, it is all to be yours,—and if I give you a little beforehand, you will not be in a hurry to run the old boy to ground, ay?"

"No, sir; I should be very ungrateful."

"Well, I believe the way not to be wished out of the way is to be just and generous. I certainly think many fathers cause themselves to be little regretted by their own selfish conduct, or,

as they term it, by keeping the reins in their own hands."

Mark assented to this remark, and then telling his uncle he should be out the greater part of the evening, he retired to his own bed-room, having first desired the waiter to let him know as soon as Mr. Edward Sileby called; and there he sat down to debate within himself on the best and safest mode of procuring the disguises for Sebastian and Loraine.

He had just decided on his plans when Edward arrived.

"Poor Sebastian is in a sad state," he exclaimed; "almost more dead than alive. I never saw such an utter prostration of the mental and bodily energies. I believe he will be dead ere night. The Prussic acid——."

"Good God!—you have not let him have it?" anxiously inquired Mark.

"No—but I really think it would be mercy to put him out of his misery. There is no hope left."

"There is hope," replied Masborough, and

confidence of the narrator.

"Your uncle," he argued
you the money for such a pur

"The purpose I did not tel
he *has* given!"

"Indeed! But the disguise
such as will suit the purpose
running the risk of detection?

"I have planned it all,"
"Come along. I shall nee
and I will explain every thing

The two friends went to
house, where Masborough
cloak, a turban, a large whit
These things they took in a h
house of Mrs. Sileby. They
that lady of their intentions.

into the pocket. They took possession of a small room, to which the window belonged which Mark had described to Loraine. It had been the housekeeper's room in the time of the previous occupier, but by Mrs. Sileby it was only used to hold a few boxes and hampers. They gave positive orders that no one should interrupt them there during the whole day, as they were going to be particularly engaged; and then, having secured the door, Mark unpacked the parcel of the purchases he had made. The turban and beard he put into the bag, and exchanged his coat for the Turkish cloak. Over this he wore his own cloak, which concealed his altered dress, and the bag. They then sallied forth, locking the door, and taking the key with them. The course they took was towards the city. On their way they looked for and found an empty house, labelled "To be let or sold," and "to be viewed." This was what they wanted. There was an old woman in the house taking care of it, and ready to show it to visiters. As she was displaying all its advantages of situation and arrangement, Mark

contrived to linger behind Edward and her; and as soon as he heard them talking on the floor above, he quickly tied on his beard, assumed the turban, and leaving the cloak, as had been agreed between him and Edward, for the latter to bring away, he walked out of the house with his bag under his arm. Edward was waiting to hear the door shut; and as soon as the expected sound reached his ears, he said to the woman, "I hear my friend is gone—he was in a great hurry. I must not lose him;" and thrusting a half-crown into her hand without further explanation, he ran down the stairs, taking care to carry off the cloak from the room in which he had last seen Mark, and where it was to be left. The woman looked at the half-crown, and rung it upon the floor. Finding it a good one, and knowing there was no furniture nor any thing moveable which could be stolen, she was quite satisfied.

When Edward got out of the house, he looked, according to their arrangement, on the opposite side of the way for his friend, whom he easily

recognised, notwithstanding his Jewish costume. After an exchange of intelligence by the eye, Masborough walked forwards, and Edward followed at a little distance, keeping the old clothesman in sight. Masborough now directed his steps rapidly to that low part of the City, near the Tower and the shipping, where are to be seen an order of shops peculiar to the neighbourhood. Amongst others, he was not long in finding such as he wanted. He purchased some gowns, bonnets, shawls, &c.; and then stowing them away in his bag, he pursued his course homewards. Again the friends looked for a house to be viewed, but this time they were not in such luck as before. On their knocking at a door to which a label of "To be sold" was attached, it was opened by a surly man, who, eyeing them in a suspicious way, seemed to feel a difficulty in finding a reason for a gentleman and a Jew being associated together; and so, saying "it was sold," but not removing the notice, he shut the door in their faces. They moved on, and were so fortunate as to see a nar-

beard and turban, and putting on
cloak. He had filled his bag so
his purchases that it would not ad
so that they were obliged to lea
stable. The bag was altogether of
he could no longer conceal it unde
therefore he thought it better to ca
though he had come off a journey.
unperceived again into the street,
themselves into a hackney-coach
more at Mrs. Sileby's house, and
themselves in the small room w
appropriated for the occasion.
rough threw off his Turkish cloak
his own, while Edward emptied
arranged the contents.

As it was uncertain whether

father and mother, and allowed them to understand, by an equivocal answer which he gave, that Masborough had left the house. They were too much out of spirits to have borne the presence of any visiter. As soon as he could, Edward returned to the small room, and then he let Mark out of the house for the purpose of his getting something to eat. He went into a coffee-house, and soon despatched his hasty meal; after which he returned, tapped at the window, and Edward went round and opened the front door for him. From that time they sat together, waiting for the hour which Loraine had mentioned, and talking of Sebastian, the Squire, the Chessalettes, and Derwent. They had been discussing these topics a good while, when Masborough, looking at his watch, said it only wanted a few minutes to the half-hour past ten. On this they paused and watched the window. After waiting a short time, Edward said he thought Loraine would not make his attempt till the next night; and Mark replied, he thought it not impossible, but he should not despair of

seeing them till eleven, or even a little past, and at all events it would be right for one of them to be there in readiness all the night and all the following day, in case Loraine should find any unexpected opportunity. They then relapsed into the same strain of conversation as before.

"My poor mother only this morning was asking me," said Edward, "whether you had ever told me the history of that cameo ring you sometimes wear; and, notwithstanding all her troubles, she could not help smiling as she spoke about it."

"And you told her I had never told you?"

"I did. And then she gave me the history herself. She said she had a great deal of trouble in persuading Jane Chessalette to venture into your room; and it was only by long argument about reconciling the families through your marriage,—which she said would be forwarded by a little encouragement being held out to you, and which was necessary under the circumstances,—and by her promising to take the blame on herself if it

was found out, that she succeeded in inducing her to undertake the adventure. My mother says she never saw any body in such a fright in her life. By the bye, she tells me Matilda is dying for you."

"Nonsense!"

"I told her of the fright she put you in about Derwent by her letter."

"Hush! what 's that?" said Mark, getting up and going to the window. "It is so dark, I can see nothing."

A faint tap was heard, and he could just distinguish the outline of the figure of a man. He opened the window gently.

"It 's us—all right. Loraine!" said a low voice, almost breathless with agitation. "Can we get in here?"

"No," said Masborough: "it is barred. Go round to the door. Don't make a noise. Edward, go and let them in—quietly, mind."

Edward opened the door, and quickly reappeared in the room, followed by Sebastian and Loraine. Sebastian stepped towards a chair,

but missed it, and fell heavily on the floor. He had fainted.

"Go for some water or eau-de-Cologne, Edward," said Mark. "Quick. We will raise him."

Loraine and Mark lifted Sebastian into a chair, and Edward brought some water.

"I 've had much ado to get him here at all," said Loraine; "and this fainting is very unlucky. We 've no time to lose. By this time we must be missed, and they 'll be sure to come here. I see the dresses are all ready."

Sebastian began to open his eyes: he sighed heavily, and exclaimed—"Oh, not yet. Mercy! Oh mercy! I did not—I did not—It was not me, me!" and again he sunk into a stupor.

Edward and Mark chafed his temples. Loraine looked very much alarmed and impatient. At length Sebastian began to come to himself. Edward rapidly assured him he was in his friends' care, and begged him to rouse himself, as his safety depended on it. Whilst he was saying

this, Masborough took the cheque out of his pocket and handed it to Loraine. He put it back, and said rapidly, "Not that—not now. Give me some ready money for present emergency. Now, Mr. Sileby, exert yourself. Be a man." Sebastian was so far recovered as to be able to stand up. Loraine briefly explained to him that they must assume the disguises, and he would lead him to a place of concealment. Sebastian showed he understood him by beginning to take off his coat. With the assistance of Edward and Mark, they were both soon metamorphosed.

"The change—the money, sir," said Loraine.

Masborough gave him his purse.

"One thing I forgot," continued Loraine, "and that is a razor. Old women must not have beards too long, nor whiskers at all."

"I 'll bring you some," said Edward, and he flew up stairs. He soon returned with his dressing-case, from which he took two razors and a pair of scissors, and handed them to Loraine. Loraine drew out the sliding looking-glass, and quickly cut off his black and bushy

whiskers. He then approached Sebastian, and relieved him in like manner of his fewer and lighter hairs. Masborough looked at him with surprise, and expressed his admiration at his coolness and forethought.

"I learnt early in life to plan for myself, and have had some little experience in the art of stratagems," said Loraine; "but now I have not time for story-telling. Let us be off. Come and let us out, and do not attempt any communication till you hear from me. Your motions will be watched, you may be very sure."

"If you want any thing, you will contrive some way of letting us know?" said Mark.

"Ay, ay—don't hinder us. Suppose, however, if you don't hear sooner, you meet me this day week at nine at night at the statue in Charing-Cross. Mind, and look that no one is following you; and when you see me, say nothing, but go where I go."

As they were just getting to the door, Loraine turned to Edward:—"I wish you would be so good as to run up stairs again."

"Yes—what for?" said Edward.

"For some of the old lady's toppings, or fronts, or whatever you call those hair things women wear."

The slighting way in which his mother's name was mentioned brought the blood to Edward's cheek, but he suppressed all expressions of feeling, and did as he was requested. Whilst he was gone, and the other three stood at the door, Loraine, turning to Mark, said in a hasty whisper, "You can bring the amount of the cheque this day week—Bank of England, and a little gold. Don't stay at Mrs. Sileby's, unless these are your regular quarters, but act just as if nothing had happened according to your usual habits, lest you put the officers on the scent. If any body saw you talking to me this morning, they 'll be after you sooner that any of Mr. Sileby's family, when I 'm missed too.—Oh, here are the curls."

He snatched them from Edward's hand, and telling Mark to "assist his comrade in taking off her bonnet and tying one of those things on," he quickly did the like for himself. As soon as he

had made this arrangement, he impatiently and authoritatively bade Mark be quick!

"You have a right to give orders," said Mark.

"Don't be offended at my hasty manner of speaking. It's no time for compliments, and I forget I'm *a lady*. I'll be polite enough next time I see you: you shall be my guest in our garret, and over a cup of Bohea I'll tell you all particulars of our escape. I've no time for it now; but in one word it was all done just as I told you it would be. Good night."

Mark shook the offered hand, whilst Edward squeezed affectionately that of his agitated brother. "Keep up your spirits, Sib," he said, as Loraine hurried his less collected charge away.

Masborough and Edward watched them walk quickly along the street, and then returned into the room they had left. After some consultation as to what was to be done with the clothes the fugitives had put off, it was decided it would be the safest plan to destroy them entirely. Masborough requested Edward to do so, as he thought

the advice of Loraine was so prudent that he ought not to lose any time in returning to his hotel; an opinion which he forthwith proceeded to act upon. As soon as he was gone, Edward descended into the kitchen, which he found, as he expected, quite empty, all the servants being gone to bed. He put the clothes on the fire, taking care not to heap too many at a time for fear of smothering it; and though he was in constant alarm of being interrupted by the pursuers of the prisoner and the under-gaoler, he watched the last rags turn into tinder, and reduced them to fine ashes with the poker, without any thing of the kind happening. He felt a strong temptation to relieve his mother's aching heart by going to her door and telling her what had happened, but prudence suggested that, in the event of inquiry, real ignorance on her part of the whole transaction would be better for the concealed parties than assumed. Deciding therefore for the present not to extend the knowledge of the secret, he at length retired to rest.

On reaching his hotel, Masborough found it

was half-past eleven, and his uncle was gone to bed; but the waiter said he had expressed great impatience for his return, and had desired, if he came home any time before midnight, he should go up to his room and speak to him. Mark wondering what all this hurry meant, and half-afraid that something might have excited his suspicions as to the application of his five thousand pounds, took the bed-candle which the waiter had lighted.

"I think," said the man, "it's about something in the evening papers, sir; for all in a moment the old gentleman—"

"Who?"

"Mr. Masborough, sir, your uncle, I should have said, sir. 'Hope no offence."

"No, no. Go on."

"Yes, sir.—All in a moment up he jumped, laid down his knife and fork, and began walking up and down the room as hard as ever he could, all the time looking at the paper, reading a word or two, doubling his fist, and striking like, and then talking to himself short sentences in some

unknown tongue ; and then exclaiming again and again ' no time must be lost, not a moment ;' and then saying he wanted you—and at last—"

"Yes, at last ?"

"He sat down again, called for the cheese, and finished his dinner !"

"Oh ! and that, I suppose, finishes your story ?"

"Yes, sir ; except that when he went to bed, he desired you to be told to look in in passing, if you came home in time."

"Well. I 'm going now."

"Have you any notion what there could be in the paper, sir, to put him in such a taking ? I 've read it twice through, and can find nothing at all likely."

"You had better read it again since you are so curious, and they say the third time pays for all."

With these words, Mark left his inquisitive informant, ascended the stairs, and tapped at his uncle's door.

"Come in, Mark. I 'm lying awake for you,—'*ad mediam noctem expecto*,' ay?"

Mark found the Squire sitting up in his bed with a table at his bed-side, on which was a lamp and a newspaper.

"So you 've got my message! And now, what do you think I want you for?"

"The very thing I 'm come to learn, sir."

"Well, then, sit down, and lend me your ears. Do you remember what I told you of my last interview with Sir Charles Chessalette?"

"Yes."

"And what I told you of my sentiments?"

"Yes. You said you should not like to be any way connected with the family, as by marriage."

"Stuff! I mean about politics—who thought of marriage or such ridiculous trash?"

Mark nodded his assent, and his uncle went on.

"Now, you must know, I find my prophetic observation exactly verified! I said the old thief had

devised some plan on the nonce ; for, take it for granted, Mark, your shallow-brained fools are full of low cunning, just like monkeys, whom they otherwise much resemble. The fact is, we all do in some respects, as my Lord Monboddo has remarked ; and indeed to me much reflecting, '*sæpenumero mihi cogitanti*,' it has ever appeared that there is much difficulty in showing whether reason and instinct differ in kind or only in degree ; for when we compare the most ignorant and benighted of the human race with the most sensible of animals, and—oh, if you are to yawn in that way, I—"

"I beg you a thousand pardons, my dear sir. I have been so busy all day that I feel tired and sleepy, otherwise I am sure you would have found me a most attentive listener to your ingenious theories and your disclosure as to Sir Charles, whatever it may be, and whenever you may come to it."

"Really, Mr. Mark, you are grown very rude of late ; you 've quite lost your good manners,—'*quantum mutatus ab illo*.' But to return ; I saw the Baronet had some manœuvre in his head—

what should you think of his getting the Honourable Irus Need to make a vacancy at L—— ?"

"Indeed!"

"Ay, indeed. Read that;" and the Squire pointed out a part of the paper, and continued, "I have no doubt he has bought him out."

Mark read the following paragraph:

"Borough of L——. We are informed by a correspondent, whose accuracy has never deceived us, that the Hon. Irus Need has accepted the Chiltern Hundreds, and that Sir Janus Place will this evening move for a new writ in consequence. Our friend goes on to say, there is little doubt that a certain Baronet, whose family have resided in the neighbourhood of L—— for centuries, will supply the vacancy, as it is known that he has long had an eye in that quarter. Of his standing there is no doubt. He is of high conservative principles."

"What think you of that, Mark? Was not I right? You see he evidently resolves to make the most of his neighbourhood and his influence while it lasts."

"It seems so," said Mark, who at once saw that his uncle was going to send him on an errand he would rather have escaped, inasmuch as it would have a direct tendency to widen the breach he so much wished to see healed, and would besides, in all probability, entail on him an absence from London at a time when he felt his assistance might be wanted by Sebastian and Loraine.

"It does *seem* so, for it *is* so. Now, what I want you to do, *mî Marce*, is to set off for L—— to-morrow, that is to say, provided we find by the morning papers that Sir Janus does actually move for the writ."

"But, sir—"

"But me no buts, my boy. I've set my mind on this—I must set you this task. No, I cannot let you off—I shall be '*Scopulis surdior Icari.*'"

"May I make a condition?"

"Any, unless it goes to defeat my design. Now, what is it?"

"It is two-fold—"

"In other words, you have *two, mî Marce,*" said his uncle, smiling.

"I confess it. The one is, that I be allowed to be in town this day week, in whatever state the canvassing, or even the poll, may be."

"Really, Mark, you make me think that that money was for some such purpose as I hinted—I suspect there 's a lady in the case."

"Not at all, sir, in this condition, as I will prove by consenting to go down again the next day, should you desire it. But in the other condition I admit that I am influenced by consideration for the female branches of the family, to whom I am indebted for their hospitality, and who are now allied to my most intimate friend, Derwent. I would request that the election may be conducted in a quiet courteous manner, and all asperities carefully avoided."

"Well, provided you don't compliment victory away, I don't care. Yes, I 'll agree to both conditions. Now 'put out the light,' and then put out yourself. Good-night, and good dreams to you,—'*dulcis et alta quies.*'"

Mark did as he was bid, and retired to his own room, where he was very far from enjoying all

the Squire had wished him. Sleep he could not for several hours, but he lay awake constantly expecting some unwelcome visiter to come and inquire whether he could give any information of the fugitives. At length he closed his weary eyes, and dreamed of gibbets, poison, and the witch of Endor.

CHAPTER XII.

When Mark awoke in the morning, and the events of the previous day came rushing back upon his recollection, the whole wore the misty air of unreality and a dream. Had he really been wandering about like a Jew with a long beard, and dealing in old clothes? Was it true that Sebastian was actually out of prison? Would he not be executed on the morrow? Was he himself going off for L—— at full speed, to hoist the purple and orange colours in the face of Sir Charles and the Red! He rubbed his eyes, and, lo! they fell on the newspaper which he had brought out of his uncle's room. It must be all real.

He rose, dressed himself, and descended. His uncle was already at the breakfast-table, hot and

boiling as the urn beside him, because the publication of the morning papers was later than usual.

"No doubt, the House sat late, sir," the waiter was suggesting, "and they are delayed with reporting the debate."

"Damn the delay! curse the debate! devil take the report—"

"No doubt he will, sir. The printer's devil, I suppose you mean," said Mark, entering, and amused at the Squire's impatience.

"Ah, good morning. How did you—Run, run, waiter, there's a boy with the paper over the way, there—"

"He's not our boy, sir."

"No matter whose boy, what boy, or whether he is a boy at all—a paper—has he not got papers? A paper, I say,—my kingdom for a paper!"

The waiter, to whom these ebullitions of impatience were not entirely new, although he had never seen the Squire quite so highly wrought up before, ran out into the street to the boy, and, giving him a shilling, told him that would buy

him another paper and put something into his own pocket besides, and soon returned with the broad sheet of the *Times*, wet and redolent of the printing-office. Mr. Masborough quickly glanced his eye over the debate, and was not long in finding what he sought.

"Here it is! Oh, I see it was not moved by Sir Janus—perhaps he 's ill—no matter. 'Mr. Benjamin Sack Bezzle moved that a new writ do issue for the borough of L——, in the room of the Honourable Irus Need, who has accepted the Chiltern Hundreds.—Agreed to." So, you see, *mi Marce*, there is no time to be lost."

"But, sir, you call yourself a Whig; now I am a Radical. Don't you think you had better find some one more exactly suited to your principles?"

"No shuffling, young gentleman! you 'll do, for want of a better. At least, you are not such an antipode to me in politics as Sir Charles. Your young Radical is but the tadpole of the Whig, into which he is to turn hereafter. As you grow up, you 'll find your notions of universal

philanthropy and Utopian perfection cool, and die away, and you 'll be glad in many instances to take up with the expedient and the practical. It is a course many have gone through ; myself for one."

In less than an hour after the above dialogue Mark was once more in the L—— coach. His uncle had so hastened his movements, in order to have him ready by the time at which he knew it would start, that he had only just time to put up his portmanteau, and desire the waiter to send a porter to Mr. Edward Sileby to say, 'he was unexpectedly called off for L——, but he should be back *in a week* at the latest,' and then to put himself into a hackney-coach and drive to the Bolt-in-Tun.

He had time during the day and night, in which he was whirled along inside the coach at a professed rate of nine miles an hour, and an actual one of seven and a half, to reflect on his recent adventures and his present situation, and to plan the course of proceedings to be taken in his canvass. One thing he was most firmly resolved

on, and that was to keep a watchful guard over his temper, and to be very careful not to let any ardour for victory, any political spirit, any electioneering taunt or trick of his opponent's party, betray him into word or action that could fairly give personal offence to the father of Matilda, or widen the gulf that seemed to dissever him from his beautiful prize.

As he entered the town of L——, he was amused with the various flowers of written eloquence that made the walls vocal with loyalty and arguments in behalf of 'those sound principles that had ever distinguished the RED.' Letters half a foot long, in the colour that was considered so appropriate, called upon 'the free and independent electors to vote for their King and Sir Charles.' Mark suspected from the great profusion of these addresses and the air of bustle without business, together with the animation of the different groups into which the natives were gathered, that opposition was both expected and prepared for.

The coach stopped at the King's Head. From

the balcony hung an enormous red banner, and the inn-yard was full of people, wearing ribbons of that same hue in their hats and button-holes, and shouting round a gentleman who was in the act of dismounting from his horse. Two young ladies still sat on theirs, whom Mark at once recognised as Matilda and Jane Chessalette. Their bridles were profusely ornamented with red rosettes, and they each wore ribbons of the same colour. This Mark thought so inauspicious a moment to get out of the coach, that he hesitated, and the waiter had thrice to say, "Please to alight, sir—the coach goes no farther—we 've room, sir,—these are only electioneering people," ere Mark made any answer. As soon however as he spoke and turned his face towards the man, he was recognised. The waiter had lived there some years, and had therefore seen Mark several times.

"Please to alight, Mr. Masborough," again he said, holding the door open, and adding the name, to show that he knew the passenger.

"My good friend," said Mark, "be quiet. I see I shall not be a welcome guest at your house

just now. Shut this door, and open the one on the other side. Where can I go?"

"I hope you will not leave us, sir; you 'll be very comfortable. This noise will soon be over. Sir Charles is going to speak from the balcony. I suppose you are come to support him, sir?"

The waiter had heard the prevalent rumour that a purple and orange candidate was coming from London, but he little suspected that the party he was addressing could be the person, as he believed him to be a friend of Sir Charles Chessalette, having seen him start for and return from his house, and never having heard of any quarrel.

"My friend," said Mark, slipping a half-crown into the man's hand, "I have no fault to find with the King's Head, and another time I may be with you; but, at present, I want to know which is the house where the other side are generally quartered."

"The White Lion is the purple and orange house, sir. They had a meeting there this very day to choose a candidate. I 'm sorry you are on the wrong side, sir," said the waiter, laughing, and

putting the half-crown into his pocket. "But I 'll send up your luggage, if you *must* and *will* go to the White Lion."

Masborough got out of the coach. At the same moment the crowd came pouring out of the inn-yard, and ranging themselves in the street in front of the balcony. A window opened, and out stepped Sir Charles. The air rung with shouts, and all hats waved except Mark's. His, however, was destined to move; for Sir Charles's daughters, the display of whose handsome faces their papa rightly judged would be no feeble, though silent, support to his cause, appeared close behind him, standing at his back at the open window, but not advancing outside as he did. The eyes of Mark and Matilda met. Her face turned perfectly pale as she bowed. He took off his hat. The action was remarkable, as the rest had just resumed theirs, and it caught the eye of the Red candidate. He was just beginning his speech with one of his favourite jokes:—

"Friends, fellow-countrymen, Reds!—mind, I did not say *Rads*"—a laugh and a loud hur

were following this sally, when the salute of Mark caught his eye. For a moment he thought it a civility addressed to himself by a supporter late arrived, but the next moment sufficed for recognition. He stopped, and, pointing to his rival, stammered out—"There—he—orange—purple—republican!—traitor!" and grasped the railing before him in a paroxysm of fury.

The instant he perceived he was discovered, Mark, who knew the nature of an electioneering mob too well to wish to share the favours they would bestow, had walked away up the street with rapid steps. All eyes followed the pointing finger of the Baronet, and fell on the figure of the traveller in the cloak. "Rad—Rad—Rad!" was the cry, as they rushed to seize him. To take to his heels was the impulse Mark felt, but he knew what eyes were on him, and he thought any thing more tolerable than to appear ridiculous before them. Instead, therefore, of running towards the White Lion, he rushed into t shop opposite the King's Head, trusting to Pr vidence that it might not be the property of

Red. He threw the door to, as he got in, and turned the lock. So near had he been to captivity, that his cloak was made a prize of by the foremost of his foes. The man had seized it, and would have dragged the wearer back, had not the metal clasp at the throat, by which alone it was secured, given way. A shout followed the acquisition of the trophy, and then there was a charge against the door. It bore the assault.

Fortunately for Mark, he had thrown himself under the protection of a friend, as the shop belonged to a Radical shoemaker, who bore the name and boasted the blood of the renowned Wat Tyler. The sturdy old fellow had been standing at his door with his arms folded, and a supercilious smile on his countenance ready made up to receive the damnable doctrines he knew he should hear from over the way. He had quickly perceived the nature of Mark's situation, and as he rushed into his shop, he himself also stepped within its precincts, ready to cover his retreat, and to bolt the door. But the rapidity of Mark had been such that he had been

anticipated. He however, without saying a word, took up an enormous iron bar, which he put into its place across the door, and then pointed it out to his sudden visiter with a look of satisfaction.

"Good," said Mark. "That will not easily give way. I'm much obliged to you."

"Turn him out, Tyler," cried a chorus of angry voices at the window.

"Turn him out, or we'll come in," was the second cry, and it was followed by the smashing of many panes in the window.

The shoemaker put his stout arm on Mark's shoulder, and moved him towards the back-door; then, making him a sign to follow, he stepped into a sort of back-kitchen, and from that he led him into a long narrow garden. At the end was a low wall, over which they readily climbed, and then found themselves in a path, something between a street and a lane, with alternately walls and hedges on both sides. From it at right angles, and parallel with the garden they had come through, was a footpath.

"There they come! we've just beaten them,"

said Tyler, speaking for the first time, and quickening his pace into a run. He came to a high narrow gate. It was locked. Nothing disconcerted, the son of St. Crispin put his huge shoulder against it, and tore the frail and somewhat decayed timber from its hinges. Mark entered through the breach, and his companion said, "Here you are safe. This is the back of the White Lion; my friends are here, and, though you are a stranger, I hope they are yours." Saying this, he led Mark into the house. As they entered, they looked behind, and saw their pursuers standing at the gate, as if doubting whether to come on, or go back.

The landlord stood in the passage, and looking at the new-comers, and then down his garden, where he saw the people at the gate, he exclaimed—

"What's all this, Mr. Tyler?"

The shoemaker briefly explained the urgency of the case; and the landlord, touching his hat to Mark, said he was glad to afford him shelter, and hoped he was one of the right sort.

house my home during my [illegible]

The host bowed.

"Are there any of the purple and or
here in the house just now?" inquired

"Mr. Hampden Howler, I think,
committee-room. Shall we go and see

Masborough found the patriot, and
plained his errand. Mr. Howler exp
great satisfaction he felt at seeing a ge
well qualified come to relieve them
difficulties.

Mark bowed in acknowledgement o
pliment, which he felt deserved the
titude as it was perfectly gratuitous.
proceeded: "we have been in grea
dilemma whom to start, sir. The
already in the field; and though th

coming from the enemy, so that we did not know how far to trust it. We were so pushed that people even spoke of putting up Gracchus Gray, the liquor-merchant, a most incompetent talking man, though it does certainly happen that he is on our side. I 'm glad we shall not have him: your arrival will at all events prevent that disgrace, and I hope with such a leader we may emancipate the borough."

Mark at once guessed there was no little rivalry between these co-patriots, but he thanked Mr. Howler for his good wishes, and requested him to assist him in making known his arrival, and calling together a meeting of the supporters of the cause.

A short address was drawn up, stating that Mark Masborough, Esq., was arrived in the town, and was anxious to receive the support of the friends of freedom, &c., and concluding with a notice that he would have the honour of stating his sentiments to the electors at ten o'clock the next morning. This document Mr. Howler un-

dertook to have printed and distributed with all possible expedition; and he promised to call personally on the leading individuals of their party, and notify Mr. Masborough's desire to be introduced to them.

As soon as he was gone on this errand, Mark turned his attention to his deliverer, Mr. Tyler, assuring him he would pay for all damage which his shop had sustained.

The zealous old man said, he was well paid in the knowledge that the party he had sheltered turned out to be the champion of the cause; but Mark succeeded with a little gentle violence in forcing him to accept some more sterling satisfaction.

Being left alone, Mark penned a long and elaborate address to the electors, in order that it might circulate amongst those who might fail to hear his oral exposition of his sentiments. In this he took especial care to say that he hoped his honourable opponent would see by his conduct, and that of his party, that they merely opposed

him on public and political grounds, and not out of any question of his private and individual merits.

In the evening he submitted this address to the criticism of those gentlemen whom Mr. Howler had gathered together. They all approved of it, and of the candidate himself; though one or two said they thought Sir Charles's conduct in setting his ruffians upon Mr. Masborough scarcely merited his polite and gentlemanly assurance of entertaining no personal animosity.

Mr. Howler, however, was of an opposite opinion. He declared, "he for his part was an advocate for universal benevolence, and he thought the contrast of the meekness of the one, and the bloody-minded and atrocious ferocity of the other, would heap coals of fire on his head; on which account he entirely approved of those expressions."

The conclave were sitting, discussing the numbers that had polled last election, the alterations there would be at this, the certainty of their own success; and Mark was being catechized on several points of political doctrine, and requested to re-

triennial parliaments, and ret
Gracchus Gray entered the r
upset the harmony of the meet
he made upon Mr. Hampden H
moning him as well as the r
continued the angry republica
known we had a candidate at all
he—that man there—should tell
The most narrow-minded, on
pitiful scoundrel that ever dis
he espoused! He! This was n
Masborough. This told me
come;" so saying, he handed
placard in red letters, to the foll

"THE RAD'S ARRIVAL! T
OF THE RAD!

"Friends, the expected enemy h

seen to stand listening like a spy, and then *sneaked* off in double quick time into the house of a certain notorious old man of AWL-*work*, who got nothing for *his panes*. Lest he should show his juvenile face again, up, Reds,—up and be doing!

"Your faithful friend, C. C."

Masborough had no doubt from what quarter this choice specimen of electioneering wit emanated, but it did not in the least alter his determination or tempt him to recriminate. He laughed, begged Mr. Gray to allow him to keep it, and hoped he would not feel annoyed at Mr. Howler's unintentional over-sight, adding, "I am much obliged to my honourable opponent for this elegant effusion, since it has brought to my side one supporter of whom I have heard so much." Mr. Gray was appeased, and several voices cried "Bravo" at the turn Mark had given to what was so evidently meant to annoy him.

Before he retired for the night, Mark wrote a few lines to his uncle, to tell him how he had sped so far, and accompanying them with the squib above given, and one or two others: he

made them up into a parcel, and sent it by a night coach, as he found the post would be going off on the following day about the very time at which he thought it probable he should be in the midst of his denunciations of ministerial profligacy, and his eloquent thunders in behalf of that cause "for which Hampden bled in the field, and Sidney died on the scaffold."

He rose early, took a turn before breakfast to strengthen his nerves, and, it may be, to rehearse his maiden speech to the hedges and to the herds.

Before ten o'clock his room was filled with such of the more influential of his supporters as considered themselves entitled to the privilege of the *entrée*, and the street outside was far more crowded than he had beheld it the day before a little lower down in front of the King's Head. Of purple and orange favours he could see no scarcity, and of noise and shouting there was the usual abundant supply.

It chanced that, as opposite the King's Head there lived that most ardent of patriots, the

shoe-maker; so opposite the White Lion there lived a most zealous supporter of the Tory candidate. Over the door was blazoned in letters of gold, and of size the most ample, SANDS, GROCER AND TEA-DEALER. Several of Masborough's partisans were considering the truth of a report that some system of annoyance was preparing at that hostile house. It appeared that Miss Sarah Sophia Susan Sands, who was grown up in her own opinion to an age which entitled her to have a lover, as she was in her fifteenth year, had for some time held in thrall the juvenile heart of Mr. Cato Gray, the eldest-born of the zealous patriot. Now it happened that Cato had been early that morning in the back-parlour of Mr. Sands, feasting his eyes on the fair offspring of Toryism, whilst her soft hand had proffered the sweet dried plum of France, and the golden fruit of Spain; but both of which had last come from the well-stored shop of her papa. Not dearer to the bee that settles from the summer air on the dewy and fragrant flower he loves so madly, is

the honey-drop he sips from the inmost folds of its heart, than were to Cato the sweet offerings of his young Pomona. "Ah, Sophia!" he exclaimed, (for the young lady had elected that name as the most harmonious and romantic of the lot her godfathers and godmothers at her baptism had endowed her withal,)—"ah, Sophia! 'These are sweets *from* the sweet!' Dear love, this gift is every way grateful,—not least that it shows,

> 'By all those token-fruits that tell
> What words can never speak so well,'

that my sweet Sophia does not utterly disdain what she knows to be so dear to her Cato's heart, the purple and orange!"

"Ah! Cato," replied the lady, "my papa is going to play old gooseberry with you purple and orange people to-day. La, it will be such a bit of fun!"

This was a sad *lapsus;* but the tender maid resisted all Cato's urgent prayers to enlarge the hint. She even enjoined him not to tell the little she had let transpire; but Cato was too

warm an admirer of the cause of Freedom not to sacrifice love at her shrine. He told his noble father. What could it mean? It was as mysterious as the letter which conveyed the warning of the gunpowder-plot! What could it mean? Some thought a water-engine was stationed there, ready to play upon the purple and orange heads of the multitude below. Some said hot boiling pitch would be poured down as upon besiegers of old. But could Miss Sands be such an Amazon as to call so murderous an infliction merely a 'bit of fun?' Conjecture was at a loss. Certain it was, the shop-windows were closed; but that might be owing to the warning drawn from the fate of Mr. Tyler. It was agreed that they should make preparation to meet the annoyance, whatever it might turn out to be; and for that purpose a chosen band of slingers and throwers, each with a bag of stones round his neck, was stationed on the third floor of the White Lion.

The clock struck ten—Masborough was going to step out upon the balcony—

feature with which the White Lion was no less provided than the rival house—when Mr. Howler begged for a moment's delay. He went out of the room and quickly returned, handing in his wife, the fair Mrs. Howler, who bore an enormous scarf of purple and orange.

"Wear these colours, glorious champion!" said the lady—"ominous—ominous!"

"And be they ominous of victory, you fool—" muttered her husband, prompting. The poor lady, to whom such public support of her husband's politics was entirely new, was so alarmed, and so little self-possessed, that she had forgotten her short speech, and she hardly knew what she was saying, or even whether she was standing on her head or on her heels. Catching the words, she managed to breathe out, as Mark gallantly knelt for her to throw the scarf over his shoulders, "and be they ominous of victory, you fool!"

This mal-à-propos and too literal accuracy was almost as bad as the Chinese tailor's matter-of-fact adherence to instructions, who, in making a

coat for an English officer by a pattern emanating from Willis, copied his sample with a spirit of such close imitation, that he omitted not to make the patch which had been superadded to the elbow during the voyage. There was a general laugh at the poor lady's blunder, and she retreated out of the room, Mark handing her to the door, as her husband was too angry to offer his arm.

Wearing his scarf, and supported by Mr. Gray on the one side, and Mr. Howler on the other, Mark now stepped out upon the balcony. The air was rent with acclamations.

"I am come, men of L——, Englishmen," began Masborough, as soon as the tumultuous greeting subsided; but ere he could add another word, his voice was drowned in the most discordant noise that ever sounded upon mortal ears. From the windows on the first-floor of Mr. Sand's house his hopeful family stepped back—the windows were thrown open—and a dozen stout men commenced blowing with horns, trumpets, and

catcalls, beating brazen pans, and yelling with their own iron throats. On the floor above, the masked battery was played in the same way; whilst the mob below, vociferating their indignant remonstrance, rendered the whole uproar stupendously deafening. In a few seconds, however, the musicians were seen to fly hastily back, and the windows to be broken with rapid crashes. The mob looked up, and saw the stones issuing from the upper floor of the inn. This diversion was loudly cheered; and as they waved their hats on high, they left their heads bare to receive such globes of the granite hail as, missing Mr. Sand's windows, fell rebounding from his walls. Mr. Sands had well fortified and barred his lower story, but the upper part of his house he had with singular want of foresight left undefended. The consequence was, that he, his family, servants, apprentices, musicians, and all, had to retire and remain in the back part of the premises. Their object being achieved, the band of stone-throwers desisted from plying their

artillery, and, after some time silence being restored, Mark again began his speech:

"I am come, as I was saying, men of L——, free-born Englishmen! to offer to you, the worthy and independent electors of this borough, an opportunity of emancipating yourselves from the influence of a powerful party.—" (He would no doubt have said, the 'tyranny of a hateful faction,' had he not borne in mind his resolution not to give cause of offence to the Baronet.) "It is alleged against those who adopt those opinions, which you and I hold, and which are similar to those which have been held by the wise and good of all ages, both the patriots of ancient Rome," (*hear, hear!* from Mr. Gray,) "and our own illustrious ancestors," (*hear, hear!* from Mr. Howler,)—"it is alleged against us, that we would overturn all order to enrich ourselves with the spoils of anarchy. Now, gentlemen, I ask you whether *we* are not the very best friends of order, who desire to rectify abuses, and not to dispense with all government, but to have a

government of such a nature as shall preserve the rights of the people?

> ' Who first taught worlds enslaved and realms undone
> The enormous faith of many made for one?'

For '*one*' does the poet say? Alas! *we* are made for *many*. Not one shepherd shears us, but a score—even to the skin. Shepherds did I call them? I should rather have styled them hungry wolves." (Groans.) "Yes, my friends, too long have the inhabitants of this once free land, this land which boasts of a Magna Charta, and whose sons are wont to sing that 'Britons never will be slaves,' too long have they bent the neck, and borne 'the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely.'

"But it shall be so no more." (Cheers.) "Yes, those are the cheers of Britons, 'who never will be slaves.' They go to my heart."—(Here there was a slight disturbance under the balcony, as of some persons attempting to enter the house at the front-door below. Amongst them Masborough caught a glimpse of his old

antagonist Mr. Viper; but he felt no inclination to imitate the Baronet's behaviour towards himself, and denounce the compounder of essences as a spy. He proceeded after a short pause.) "Yes, my friends, I hope that those promises of better times which have long been delayed, and again and again put off, till the fond hope of the patriot has died within his breast, are now about to be realized. I trust that the day of Reform—" (Loud cheers.)—"Reform is at hand? The humble advocate of that great cause, that cause wherein 'you, and I, and all of us,' are so deeply concerned, I come to solicit your votes." (Cheers.) "I come amongst freemen in spirit, myself free! I come the champion of liberty—"

"Sir—you are my prisoner!" said a clear deliberate voice, and at the same time a hand fell upon the shoulder of Mark with the grasp of a vice. A tall fierce-looking man with bushy whiskers held a warrant up to our orator's eyes, whilst another of rather smaller dimensions was saying in an inquiring tone to Mr. Viper,

"You are responsible, this is the man?" All was confusion. The mob below clamoured without the least idea of what it all meant, and the supporters of the candidate on each side fell from him in amaze. Mark, although the interruption came upon him not less suddenly than the highwayman's

"Damn your eyes, your money or your life,"

upon Don Juan on Shooter's Hill, as he soliloquized concerning the security of property in this favoured island, at once comprehended how the whole had come to pass. He told the officer he would not attempt to escape, if he would allow him to finish his speech. But Mr. Viper gave the man a look, which he readily interpreted into a hint to refuse. Masborough then begged to be allowed to say one word in explanation. This also was denied, and the two officers were proceeding to bear him off by force. A loud groan rose from the mob, mixed with angry threats, and the men saw fit to desist. Masborough now told the officer he must see that he need not go till

he chose, but added, he would attend him in two minutes; and then turning to the crowd below, and waving his hand for silence, he said:

"My friends, these appearances would place me in such a position in your opinions as would be far different from the one it is my ambition to occupy. I shall therefore in a few words explain to you what has procured me the honour of this visit from these two gentlemen, and with that I shall rest satisfied for the present, as I doubt not I shall be here again on this balcony in a day or two, again addressing my friends like 'a free man.'" (Loud cheers.) "Gentlemen, it is known, no doubt, to many of you through the public papers, that a member of a neighbouring family of hitherto high and honourable character has been tried and condemned for forgery." (Cries of "Yes—Sileby—hang him. They hang the poor.") "My friends, that gentleman was, in my opinion, innocent—" (Cries of "No—no—you don't want to hang a gentleman.") "Hear me, I beg of you—my time is now limited; and if I do not satisfy you as to my conduct, remember.

you have power to punish." ("Bravo. Go on!") "I say, then, I do believe him innocent. Now, because I have elsewhere and before now expressed that opinion, it has been inferred, as I learn by this warrant, that I have assisted in his escape." (Tumult—hisses.) "Allow me to explain to you, that neither to my accusers nor to you do I say I did assist him—" (Cheers) "neither, my friends, do I say I did not." (Hisses.) "But this I will say, that I know I am addressing men of sound minds and right feelings," (Cheers,) "and I therefore feel confident they will not condemn me before I am tried; they will not at once punish me because I am accused; they will suspend their judgment according to the good old rule, and hold me innocent till I am proved guilty." (Cheers.) "Again, I say I do not deny the charge." (Hisses.) "I will not let you think I do. But neither do I admit it. No man is bound to criminate himself. Gentlemen, as on the one hand I entreat you to pause before you decide, in full confidence that one day this charge will be so disposed of as to place me well in your

opinions, so also do I venture to suggest to you that the accusation itself is only for an offence which could not have been committed to enrich myself or to rob another—"

Here the tumult became so loud, and the confusion of the different cries, especially of those who called 'silence,' grew so great, that further hearing was hopeless. Mark therefore retired from the window, and resigned himself to the direction of the officers. Those persons had been sent from Bow Street in pursuit of Mark, on its being ascertained, as Loraine had anticipated it would be, that they had been seen in communication. They had first gone to Stevens's, where, their bird being flown, they were at once directed by the Squire himself whither to turn their search, as he said, "he did not believe his nephew had done any thing wrong, and if he had, he ought to answer for it; and he would not be the man to screen any one from justice."

On their arrival at the King's Head at L——, and inquiring for Mr. Masborough, they soon learnt he was at the White Lion. It happened

that a London thief, who was come on a speculation of tithing the pockets of the collectors, whilst they were listening to the eloquence of the candidates, saw the officers as they went into the inn, and spread the news who they were. Mr. Viper was near, and having learnt their errand, and hearing them ask some particulars as to Mark's person, he volunteered his services to have *the pleasure* of pointing out the man they sought.

CHAPTER XIII.

HAPPY England! Once thou hadst 'a heaven-born minister,' and still hast thou many of the 'heaven-born' race! No sooner do thy lordlings wear breeches at all, than they assume them streaked with gold lace and running up to meet scarlet coats, the young heroes are tied to their swords, they are the defenders of thy shores! Thy hereditary legislators, in like manner, have scarcely dried their eyes, or seemed to dry, at the paternal tomb, ere they rush into thy Upper House, and take to law-making like young ducks to the water. Nor, when the laws are made, do they lack those who are to administer them with *equally* small preparation. 'The beardless youth, his guardian at last removed,' sets up his pack and takes out his *dedimus* together. The soap-

boiler washes his hands of his business, or the wealthy ex-'baker to the royal family,' seeks the dignified retirement of the country, nor waits either long ere the lord-lieutenant writes him esquire and justice of the peace. Doubtless, Mark Masborough, as soon as he should be proprietor of Rotherington, would, without delay, be ascribed to the number of the great unpaid. How well he was qualified, how much law he knew, might be guessed by any one who had seen his start, when, as he was whirling along in a chaise towards London by the side of his captor, (whose assistant rode on the box,) he asked Mr. Holden how long he thought he would be detained before he was set at liberty on bail; and that knight of the iron hand replied, "On bail! By Gad, I wish you may get it! Do you think now, Serjeant Sullen is the boy to take bail for such a felony as this?"

"Felony!" exclaimed Masborough.

"What!" replied his companion, "and so you thought it was only a *misdemeanour*, my hearty?"

"Truly I do not know the distinction."

"Why, you see, a felony is a much more serious charge than a misdemeanour. A misdemeanour is a—a sort of a thing—a misdemeanour is in fact defined, as I 've heard the Serjeant say scores and scores of times, (so you see I ought to know,) a misdemeanour is any offence less than a felony."

"Yes; and a felony is what? How do you or 'the Serjeant' define that?"

"Why, a felony is a thing, which is—a—a felony is an offence against the peace of our Lord the King, his crown and dignity."

"And is not a misdemeanour that too?"

"Why, a—yes,—but Acts of Parliament say one thing is a felony, and another is a misdemeanour; and the difference is—you see—a—that in felonies, which is your case, you are not allowed the benefit of Counsel to speak for you!"

Mark found he must be satisfied with Mr. Holden's definition for want of a better, and for some time travelled on in silence, musing on the delay which would probably throw him out at

L——, but not fearing, in spite of the formidable name of his crime, any further inconvenience beyond that, and perhaps a little show of anger on his uncle's part.

As soon as ever they arrived in London, they drove to the office over which Serjeant Sullen presided. It was an hour at which that worthy was not in attendance, and during the period which Mark had to wait, he had the opportunity of hearing a slight description of that Rhadamanthus's character. A young gentleman, who was in charge for having assaulted a person the night before at the theatre, and who was seated in the office next to Mark, after a few commonplace observations had led them into conversation, gave him the following sketch: "You will see an animal, sir, who would be the making of Wombwell's fortune, if he belonged to him, for he could carry about the country in one cage, and with the keep of one mouth, (though certainly not a small one,) a specimen of the cat, the ass, the pig, the mule, the porcupine, and the bear—all in one! This man has a certain de-

gree of low cunning blended with the most inconceivable ignorance; his obstinacy is perfectly awful, his wilfulness unbounded, his appearance disgusting, his temper the most querulous, his behaviour the most brutal. The first view that he takes on any case, which is generally wrong, nothing can turn him from; arguments fall back from his long deaf ears, like hail from a wall; his—— But 'talk of the devil,' here he is."

"Silence you, there! Get out of the way, you sir, or I'll just crack your thick skull for you with my staff."

These orders from his satellites announced the advent of the genius loci, whose spirit they breathed.

Bumping down into his chair, he proceeded to hear the night charges, but had not got through the first, when, as if suddenly recollecting himself, he drew a letter from his pocket, and inquired "whether a gentleman of the name of Masborough, the same that he had issued a warrant against the day before, was yet arrived from the country?"

"Here he is," said Mr. Holden, advancing with his charge.

"Sir, you are discharged," said the justice.

Mr. Holden's hand dropped from his prisoner's shoulder, and Mark acknowledged his satisfaction by a bow.

The justice proceeded: "After I had issued my warrant for your apprehension yesterday, I received a communication from my very intimate friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department, to say, that the charge against you is not intended to be pressed, as circumstances have transpired to show that the party, whom it is supposed you assisted in rescuing from prison, is altogether innocent."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Masborough.

"Stop, sir. If you interrupt me, I will still commit you—for contempt."

"I beg your worship's pardon. Excuse my joy for my friend's deliverance."

"Your friend's deliverance, sir, is a thing which reflects but little credit on you. Had you not assisted him in evading the law, he would

ere this have been out of the reach of deliverance, and in the awful presence of eternity. Umph! and, sir, though I should have been very sorry, no doubt, to have heard of a life's being taken when it afterwards appeared that the owner and proprietor of that life was not guilty, yet I must say, I regret the view my very intimate friend, the Secretary of State, has taken. Though accident may have shown your friend to be innocent, the law proved him to have been guilty; and it would have been much better that the majesty of Justice should have been vindicated, than that success should have attended your taking the law into your own hands. However, sir, since my very good friend has thought fit to say you are not to be prosecuted, I suppose I must discharge you. I trust this warning will not be lost, that you will become a good and obedient citizen—and you may go."

The justice took a pinch of snuff, Mark bowed, Mr. Holden turned on his heel, and the interrupted case was proceeded with.

Mark hastened to Stevens's. The Squire was

not within, but had left word with the waiter that he was expecting to see or hear from his nephew in the course of the day, and for that reason he should not go far from the neighbourhood, but would just walk up to his club and make a few calls, and look in every hour, till he should come or send to him. Mark had not to wait long; the Squire appeared, punctual to his word. He greeted his nephew warmly: "Glad to see you, my boy, glad to see you. But you sha'n't stay—you must be off again to the field of L——. How did they take your sudden departure, ay? I knew you were coming back; I know all about the escape, and your warrants, and all that. I have had your friend Edward Sileby here since his liberation, for he's been to the house that Jack built, too! I know it all—old-clothes-man—beard, ay? turban, eh? and the two old ladies—he, he, he! '*In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas Corpora,*' ay? Ovid only *wrote* of Metamorphoses — you beat him hollow — '*nam vos mutâstis et illas,*' ay, boy? But where are the two ladies? Mr. Sileby cannot

find his brother nor the gaol-bird. He has told me in confidence that you are to meet that Loraine at Charing Cross. But he must meet him himself,—for I must have you back at L——, I must—that I must."

"I see Edward has told you so much, sir, that I may as well add, it was to pay Loraine for this service, and to provide him with a compensation for losing his place, that I made bold to trespass so largely on your bounty. I hope you now see it was well bestowed, and also that I was right, and the judge and jury and *others* were wrong."

"No triumphing, *mi Marce*. Remember, '*Eventus stultorum magister*.' You might, after all, have been wrong about Mr. Sebastian's innocence. At all events, you had no right to take the law into your own hands."

"Just what Serjeant Sullen has been telling me!"

"Well, the old fool is right sometimes. You know, πολλάκι τοὶ καὶ μωρὸς ἀνὴρ κατακαίριον εἶπε. Yes, he is right; you ought rather to have let

your friend die a martyr to justice, than violate the law; for, '*vir bonus est quis? Qui consulta patrum, qui leges juraque servat.*'"

"Perhaps I might have submitted, sir, had the law allowed itself a *locus pœnitentiæ;* but when a man is once hanged——"

"Yes, I know all that; and don't think, Mark, that I can blame you from my heart, though I must from my head."

"Ah, sir, the heart and the head should go together like man and wife. God has joined them for the benefit and guidance of each other; let no man put them asunder."

"Good boy! Give me that honest hand. I may say of it, as was said of Scævola's, '*Si non peccâsset, fecerat illa minus!*' and now, that I may for once imitate the conduct of our *wise* Ministers, whose delight it is to honour success and not merit, ask what reward I shall give you. Shall I buy you a new hunter, or must I gratify your roving propensities by sparing you for a two months' tour—to commence, mind, should you choose that, as soon as the election for L—— is over?"

"Neither, my good uncle. Since you mean to bestow your generosity for my having done right *by accident*, let me keep your promise as due and payable on demand. I will ask a favour of you some day."

"Well, be it so!"

"And now let me ask how all this discovery of Sebastian's innocence came about?"

"Your friend Edward Sileby can tell you better than I can, as the disclosure was made to his sister and to him. Let us go to his father's and mother's house. I told him I would bring you, if you came to me first; and he was to have done the like for me, had you gone there. Nay, now I think of it, you can have it from yet better authority than his,—you can have it from Mrs. Smith, the fountain-head."

"Smith! What Smith?"

"Ay, you may well say what Smith!—there are plenty of the name. I mean the wife of that Irish scamp, the witness, Lord Branville's friend, you know. She has left her husband, on

finding he was an impostor, in disgust. There was some quarrel—but she will tell you better about it."

Mark was all curiosity to learn the particulars, and he accompanied his uncle with great readiness to the Silebys' house. He found all the family at home, including Lady Branville, who had gone to live with her mother, and between whom and her husband (as his uncle had told Mark during their walk) articles of separation were going to be drawn up, and also another separated wife, Mrs. Smith, lately Marianne Lumley.

Great was the gratitude evinced by all the Sileby family towards the preserver of Sebastian, and the encomiums of Lady Branville were unbounded. She declared that from the first time she had heard his name, when it had been mentioned as that of the rescuer of Charles Chessalette from a watery grave, up to the present hour, when he had saved her brother from an ignominious end, and her whole family from the stain, he had ever appeared as the

harbinger of good and the bringer of joy and blessings.

The thanks and congratulations having been all gone through, Mrs. Smith commenced her story to Mark; the rest, though they had heard most of it before, taking sufficient interest to attend to it again:

"You must know that as soon as the trial was over, my husband took me into Ireland. By accident, in the course of a conversation with a party, who knew not how nearly I was interested, a disclosure took place of his real origin, which I found to be low and disreputable. The hypocrisy and deceit he had practised towards me made him now hateful in my eyes, and he quickly became aware of my altered sentiments. Words arose: he told me he never cared for me, but had merely wanted my money; whilst I threatened to leave him, and told him I knew the whole story of his birth and origin. His rage on this transported him off his guard, and beyond all reason: he swore, and, kneeling down on his knees, cursed me, and vowed, if I ever dared to breathe a syllable to any

living soul of what I had then hinted, he would make me repent it. 'Wretch!' he said, 'you know not how dangerous it is to have me for a foe! None live to triumph over me! Is not the fool who would have prevented me from having your money now in my toils? Is he not going to suffer the last disgraceful death of a felon? And why? Do you think the fool had the wit, had the courage to forge? No, it was the work of an abler hand than his! But he dared to cross my path, to insult me; and he dies!' He then paused, and added—'Such is my vengeance! As for you, you never see England again! I shall keep you here!' On this he left me; and as soon as I could collect my scattered thoughts, I formed the resolution which I have since executed. I went instantly to an able magistrate in the neighbourhood, and told him all. He said, that although I could not be a witness against my husband, I should be heard in behalf of Mr. Sileby. Accordingly, without loss of time, he sent me off for London, under the escort of his confidential clerk. Having experienced contra

winds on the passage, we did not arrive, notwithstanding every exertion, till yesterday morning, just about one hour after the time, at which, had he not escaped from prison, our poor friend would have suffered."

"Yes," said Mark, "I thought of him, I can assure you. I could not get him out of my head, nor the idea that he would have been then at the fatal spot, though I knew he was safe; and I was busy and rehearsing to myself the speech I was going to make—"

"Don't interrupt Mrs. Smith, Mark," said his uncle. "You forget she does not know of your M.P. scheme."

"Yes, I do," said the lady, "for I, naturally, when I learnt the particulars of Mr. Sebastian's rescue, inquired all about the actors in it. To proceed: the clerk at once, and without waiting for me to see any of the Sileby family, drove to the prison. As I have said, we should have been too late by a full hour; but this was not so. He then went to the Secretary of State, taking me with him; and the result was, that an order

for Edward's liberation (he too having been arrested) and yours (when you should appear) was sent to the magistrate: and further, he said he should take care to obtain his Majesty's free pardon for Mr. Sileby, whose escape he called, though not very legal, truly providential. Such is my story. What my husband will do, I know not; whether he will come and brazen it out here, as I cannot give evidence against him, or whether he will be off for America with as much of my fortune as he has laid his hand upon. I shall be glad if he chooses the latter alternative, and leaves me to retire to my old home in peace, where I know I shall be received with a welcome; and from which I shall rarely emerge, except to visit my friends at Sileby Hill, or my sister and my future brother Edward, wherever they may establish themselves."

All present expressed their congratulations at Mrs. Smith's escape from her husband. The Squire would gladly have hurried off his nephew as soon as they had heard that lady's narrative, and sent him away for L—— that very hour; but

he was so urged by the family to allow them the pleasure of his nephew's company as well as his own for the day, that, backed as the request was by a supplicating smile from Lady Branville, he could not resist.

They therefore promised to return to dinner, and spent the morning in looking after and canvassing such out-voters for L—— as might be found resident in London, and in arranging with Edward Sileby for him to meet Loraine at Charing Cross, instead of Mark, (if no means could be found for discovering their concealment sooner,) with the money, and the intelligence that Sebastian was pardoned, and he himself would never be sought after, provided he would quietly leave the country. At the appointed hour they went to Mr. Sileby's.

The day had taken a very different course to what it had once promised, and the evening passed with the speed that happy ones always do.

CHAPTER XIV.

EARLY in the morning, Mark was once more on the road to L—— ; but, this time, he was accompanied by his uncle, and travelling in his carriage with four horses. The news of his release, of the successful issue of his interference in Sebastian Sileby's behalf, and of that gentleman's innocence, had been borne to L—— before them ; and as they entered the town and were recognised, the acclamations of the multitude rent the air, again and again renewed.

The enthusiasm of the people was so great, that, though they could not proceed to the election for many days yet to come, they at once opened a book, in which they inscribed their names with a solemn pledge to "vote for Masborough," in such numbers, as to leave not a shadow of doubt of

his being returned. Many deserted from the opposite side, and the rejoicings began as if the poll was already over.

Sir Charles Chessalette, finding that his success was quite hopeless, retired from the contest, and sent a message to Mark to say he had heard of the truly gentlemanly manner in which he had avoided recriminating upon his personalities, and he felt very sorry for all unpleasantness that had taken place between them; adding, that he hoped he would come and visit them at the Hall, and offering himself to nominate him on the day of election; and concluding the whole by sending his respectful compliments to his uncle.

"Egad!" exclaimed the Squire, "this is what I call the *amende honorable*, and since we are the conquering heroes, we will do the gracious, by meeting him more than half way. I 'll go with you and call on him myself, and, if he asks me, I don't know but I may stay and dine. But, '*Danaos et dona ferentes*,' I 'll take care he does not betray me into consenting to let him have o extra day's reign at Rotherington—that 's

Resolving to strike whilst the iron was hot, or, in other words, to take his uncle whilst he was in the humour, Mark ordered the carriage to the door. He could scarce believe it was real when the Squire and he drove up to the old place together, and their joint names were announced.

They found the Baronet alone in the drawing-room. He received them with great politeness, and it was not long before the Squire and he seemed quite at their ease. Politics were avoided; the past not alluded to; reconciliation and amity seemed the order of the day, and Harmony the presiding goddess.

Mark had expressed his hopes to Sir Charles that his daughters were well, and he was just telling him he had not heard from Mrs. Derwent for a week or two, when the door opened, and Matilda and Jane entered the room. The paleness of Mark's face at the meeting, the blushes of Matilda's, were nothing, absolutely nothing, to the expression of the Squire's, as, throwing himself back upon the chair, from which he had risen on the young ladies' approach, he clasped his

hands together, and then slowly extending them apart till the one pointed to the wall where the Seasons hung, and the other to Matilda, he exclaimed :—

"Oh, Mark, the Picture! I see it all! All your heart is open to me! The Picture! The Picture itself! The Picture!"

Which was the greater, the confusion of Matilda, the embarrassment of Mark, or the astonishment of the Baronet, at these exclamations, it would be hard to say; but a group of more amazed people would not be often met with.

The servant coming to announce that the lunch was ready, recalled them to themselves, and Miss Jane Chessalette taking her papa's arm made a move. The Squire's arms dropped to his sides, and Mark recovered himself so far as to step forward and hand Matilda down stairs.

The Squire was asked, as he had expected, to remain the Baronet's guest for the day. He consented.

Mark had had his lesson to shun the dangerous ground of politics, even if he had

been too much occupied with looking on the beautiful face of Matilda.

He rallied Jane on her visit to him when she brought him the cameo ring, and the young lady threw all the blame on Mrs. Sileby.

At the close of the evening, the Squire said he should return to town the next day, but he should leave Mark in the neighbourhood till after the election; and if he chose to remain at Rotherington he could only say he consented to his accepting the invitation, which Sir Charles, he knew, was going to give him: for his own part, he was obliged to decline it, though it had been politely extended to him also.

It was arranged that Mark should accompany him back to L—— that night, and see him off in the morning, and then come back to the Hall.

As they drove out of the gates, the Squire, without waiting for his nephew to begin the subject, which he knew was uppermost in his thoughts, said:

"You are a good fellow, Mark, to have sacri-

ficed your feelings and deferred your wishes to my prejudices so long, as I now see plainly enough you have been doing. Whether I have had any suspicions, I will not say; but I will at once and freely endorse my note of promise, knowing well enough how you would wish to have it filled up. Without very much altering my opinion of the Baronet, I think, especially as I am the victor, I have borne him animosity long enough. I have had one lesson in my brother's dying unreconciled, that there should be a limit to anger, lest it should unawares last as long as our lives. I feel the truth and justice of that wise old proverb, '*Mortalis cum sis, immortale ne geras odium.*'"

"Thank you, my dear sir," exclaimed Mark. "You have rightly interpreted my wishes and endorsed my note. You know, you always made an exception in favour of *the Picture*, when you laid on me that injunction never to fall in love."

"I did. But I suppose the Picture will not content you, and you want the original! Well, I sounded Sir Charles after dinner and when you had retired to the ladies,

I find in that quarter there will be no opposition."

His uncle and Mark discussed all the topics connected with the election, with Rotherington, and with Matilda, during their drive to and their evening at L——. The next morning the Squire set off for London, and Mark returned to the Hall.

On the day, and at the hour appointed, Edward Sileby repaired to Charing Cross. Punctual as the hand of the clock at the Horse Guards, the figure of an old woman approached him. It was Loraine. The ex-gaoler was highly delighted to hear that all danger of pursuit was over. He and Sebastian had not received any tidings of the change in their favour, so secluded had they lived in their concealment in a garret in St. Giles's.

In the dusk of the evening they ventured to return to Mrs. Sileby's, and resume their own appearance.

The joy of the family may be conceived, at welcoming back their lost son, with only the

imputation of imprudence, but with no guilty stain on his character.

Loraine gave Edward a short sketch of his previous life. He was the son of a country gentleman, who had disinherited him on account of his disorderly life. This severe punishment, instead of curing him, had made him desperate: he had plunged into every vice and dissipation, and gone through a career of singular vicissitude and strange adventure. He had tried the army, navy, gambling, and trade. In the last he had been unfortunate, though apparently respectable; sufficiently so, in short, to enable him, on becoming a candidate for the office of under-gaoler, to succeed in getting the appointment. Now he was resolved to live on the interest of the money which Edward paid him from Mark, and to pass a wandering life abroad, since Government made his leaving the country a condition for their forbearing to call him to account for his conduct in assisting in a prisoner's escape, which, though the result had been such as it had, was not the less a breach of trust on his part. The

rest of the world, he said, "was large enough for him, even after this island,

'In the wide sea a swan's nest,'

was deducted; and especially America had charms for his imagination."

To America also, it was in due time discovered, Mr. Smith had retired; nor was his wife ever known to express a regret that the Atlantic rolled between them.

The Squire remarked, that "discovery and banishment were too good for the scoundrel:—he wished he had been hanged, that he might have said, as the schoolmasters say, when they whip little boys for false concords,

'*Rarò antecedentem scelestum*
Deseruit pede pœna claudo!'"

Little remains to be told. The fate of several of the parties who have been introduced in the preceding pages may be collected from the following extracts from the L——shire Chronicle,

which are selected from the files of that excellent Journal, embracing a period of two or three years.

"On Monday, the 6th instant, at St. George's, Hanover Square, Edward Sileby, Esq., second son of S. Sileby, Esq., of Sileby Hill, in the County of L——, to Laura, youngest daughter of L. Lumley, Esq., of Sileby Parva, in the same county."

"On Tuesday, the 3rd instant, at L——, Cato Gray, Esq., to Miss S. S. S. Sands, daughter of Mr. Sands, grocer, of this place."

"On Wednesday, the 4th, at L——, Charles Chessalette, Esq., son and heir to Sir Charles Chessalette, Bart., to Amelia, daughter of the late Rev. G. Masborough."

"On Thursday, *the* 1*st April*, at St. Pancras, Mr. Giles Stiles, many years the faithful servant to J. Masborough, Esq., of Rotherington Hall, to Susannah Brickman, widow of the late Mr. Brickman, of St. Giles, pawnbroker. Mr

Masborough gave away the bride, and provided a handsome breakfast for the wedding-party."

With respect to the above, it may suffice to say that the last took place after another stay of some duration in London, on the part of the Squire, and his faithful servant.

Other extracts might be made, though of minor interest, and chiefly from the register of births; but there was one event worthy of special mention, which took place before any of those recorded above, and indeed in about a month or two after Mr. Masborough's visit to Sir Charles—it was the marriage of Mark, now M.P., and Matilda. The Baronet, in consequence of this union of the families, had hastened his departure from the Hall, and given up possession to the Squire before that time. Mr. Masborough conveyed the old place to his nephew on his marriage, promising however to make it his head-quarters when in the country; and Sir Charles

and his son agreed, that whether they ever removed the other family pictures away or not, that of the Seasons should always remain. They gave it to Mark; and thus he became possessed of the original and of

THE PICTURE.

THE END.



THE PROSPEROUS MAN.



THE PROSPEROUS MAN.

CHAPTER I.

"It is madness, Miss Wyniates, to think of going home on horseback on such an evening as this, and so late too!"

"My dear Mr. Townley, have you known me all these years, and can you quote one single instance where I ever altered my mind?"

"I wish I could! But, seriously, it is dangerous to set off now: your coachman told me that Ferraby Brook was more out with all these rains than he had ever known it; not a bit of the bridge to be seen, and it will be dark by the time you get there."

"Then we should not see the bridge at all

events! Good bye, and 'thank you for all your kindness. Here come the horses. Mrs. Townley and Maria have fixed to be at Wyniates Hall next Wednesday. Do come with them. You shall be your own master, and at liberty to go out fishing all the mornings; we will not interfere with you. The brook will be within its banks again by that time, and my head-keeper has had great sport, and says the trout are grown very fine."

"I will stay with you as long as they do, if you will only oblige me by giving up your ride this evening; I really shall be very uneasy—"

"Well, well, canter over to me to-morrow morning, and inquire whether I arrived safely."

"'Beg pardon, madam," said the groom, standing with his head bare in the wind, "the coachman told me the waters are very much out, and he thought you had better not come this evening."

"There! you hear, Miss Wyniates," exclaimed Mr. Townley.

"There! you see, Mr. Townley," said Miss

Wyniates, springing to her saddle by the help of the groom, to whom she had made a sign to assist her.

"Well, it's madness, that's all I say. Besides, another storm is coming on. Look at that cloud;"—and Mr. Townley pointed to a black and threatening mass that was advancing slowly and heavily along, like a huge battle-ship of the sky.

"You will not frighten me: you only dare me! Do you think the last of all the Wyniates, though a female, fears a few drops of water? No, when we get to the brook, John may turn back, if he is afraid; I can find my way alone."

"'Beg pardon, madam," said the man, colouring, "'hope you will at least permit me to ride through the water first, to try the way: perhaps the bridge may have given way; it is much decayed."

"'Thank you, John, 'thank you; you shall do so, if you like. You see, Mr. Townley, my servant is not afraid, and do you think I have so degenerated from him who helped to conquer

at Agincourt, that I dare not ride along the highway when a brook is out? Good bye."

"Good bye," said Mr. Townley, as his late guest galloped down the coach-road, followed by her servant.

A few large drops fell as Mr. Townley reascended the steps at his door. He returned to the drawing-room, where his wife and Maria Forbes, her daughter by a former husband, were seated.

"And so, even your eloquence, Townley, has failed to detain Miss Wyniates!" exclaimed his wife, in a tone where jest and earnest were united. "You were certainly very pressing. I did not attend Miss Wyniates to the door, thinking that your arguments might have more persuasion when I was not by."

"Why, the truth is," replied Mr. Townley, "I really am afraid of an accident, the coachman has given such an account of the flood."

"And if she should be drowned, sir," said Miss Forbes, "the loss would be irreparable—there would be an end to *all the Wyniates!*"

"A most feeling aud delicate remark, Miss Forbes, for a young *leddy*," replied Mr. Townley, imitating the Scotch accent of his little-loved daughter-in-law.

"Never mind, my dear," cried her mother. "You did not know that Mr. Townley was one of Miss Wyniates' many admirers, or you would understand his very great *anxiety* for her safety on the occasion of this grand deluge."

"I wonder you have accepted Miss Wyniates' invitation, then, if you have any feelings of jealousy on that ground."

"Jealousy, indeed! Why, my very reason for accepting the invitation was to give you the pleasure of the company of your former flirt. To be sure, she is rather *passée:* let me see, I 'm five-and-thirty—heigho!—and we have made out that she is four or five years older, at least."

"To make your curiosity easy on that point, my dear, I can inform you that she is now in her thirty-ninth year. She and I were born within two days of each other, and, as you know,

within ten miles. Nay more, we were always playfellows; and, to crown all, I do not deny that I offered my hand—"

"Which she declined."

"She did. She knew there was no love between us, and that I merely came forward to please my father, who longed to see our small estates united to her vast ones. Augusta Wyniates was left an orphan, and whoever married her, was to take her name, and have a splendid property, which, in default of her leaving a male heir, is entailed on a second cousin."

"And he now, I should think, has a pretty good chance!" exclaimed Mrs. Townley. "And so that is the history of your amour with the proud Augusta. I never understood it so before; indeed, Mrs. Earwig, the curate's wife, told me you were refused because you had not a title, she having sworn to her father on his death-bed never to marry any thing less than a lord!"

"What nonsense! Observe, my sweet wife, that the odds always are in favour of Mrs.

Earwig's news being a lie—and, do you note the same, my bonny young leddy."

"Really, Mr. Townley, I must protest against your insulting poor Maria in this way about her accent. She cannot help it; and it is music in my ears. It is the very tone of my poor Forbes, who is in heaven—Heigho!"

"Heigho! Who sent him there?"

"Mr. Townley, your insinuation is most base. Poor Forbes and I were the happiest couple! I wish I had been half so happy since."

"How ill-natured people are then! Why, it was your beloved Mrs. Earwig herself who whispered to me that she had heard it said that it was his matrimonial cares that made him destroy himself."

"Base woman! I will go down to her house this instant! Yet, no; I scorn her too much! —but I will write to her. Maria, love, give me my desk."

Mr. Townley smiled, placed himself with his back to the fire, and began to whistle the tune of "Pray, Goody, please to moderate," &c.

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happen to know the man's history, as it made somewhat of a noise at first; but it was old Wyniates, her father, who promoted him, or rather it was the lapse of time, for he grew too old to be a dirty errand-boy any longer. The fact is, old Wyniates returning home from hunting one cold winter's evening, as he passed through Coryton, the village just beyond Wyniates, found a poor beggar-woman lying in a ditch. The old gentleman told me himself that she looked so disgustingly dirty, that he could hardly bear to go near her; and when he found that she was Scotch, which he discovered by her accent, Miss Forbes—"

"What do you mean by that, you, you—" exclaimed Mrs. Townley. "Well, I must put up with these insults, since my fate is so. Alas, poor Forbes!"

"Poor murdered Forbes!"

There was a long pause. Mrs. Townley neither moved nor spoke. Miss Forbes put her handkerchief to her face, as if in tears. Mr. Townley

walked up and down the room, now and then looking out of the window.

He was a man of a naturally quiet, easy, and indolent disposition. He had lived a bachelor till he was about seven-and-thirty, when he had met with the accomplished Mrs. Forbes, then recently become a widow, at Cheltenham. That lady was there on the look-out for a settlement for herself, as well as a lover for her daughter, who had attained her sixteenth year, and was therefore old enough, as her mother thought, (she herself having married at seventeen,) to *come out*. The widow having, upon due inquiry, convinced herself to a certainty that Mr. Townley was a country gentleman with an unencumbered estate of upwards of £3000 a-year, displayed an inch or two more of her beautiful leg to him, *quite accidentally*, than she vouchsafed to ordinary eyes. She first blushed, and then smiled at the discovery, and, in short, she so beset the artless and unpractised Squire, that, somehow or other, he found himself one fine summer's day driving home a wife and a

daughter ready grown up. To the daughter he had at first behaved with the utmost kindness; but her selfish disposition had turned his heart from her, and his dislike had gone on gradually increasing, till it had deepened into the most settled aversion. His wife, too, as she had married him merely for an establishment, soon began to show that she thought more of her carriage than her husband, and, though she had no objection to his lavishing as much money as he pleased on matters conducing to *her* comfort, she greatly objected to his spending any on his own. She ventured to suggest the propriety of his reducing his stud, and riding one of the carriage-horses out hunting; and reminded him, that though they did not appear likely to have any family, there was her poor dear Maria, to whom she expected, when she married him, he would behave like a father.

Mr. Townley was disgusted with these attacks on his arrangements, and the result was, that ere long his temper was completely soured towards both, and he and his wife lived on such terms as their language in the preceding dialogue betrays.

However, Mrs. Townley wished "to keep things together," as she phrased it to her daughter, "for the sake of appearances, and in the hopes that Townley, if he did not do as much as he ought, would still remember her in his will."

"Come, go on with the Foundling's history, Townley," at length said the lady, having succeeded in swallowing her anger. "You left Miss Wyniates' body-guard in the ditch, and were relating what her father told you about the poor beggar-woman."

"Well, then, old Wyniates told me the woman looked so offensively, that he felt very much disposed to give up his task of assisting her, and leave her where she was to her fate; but, just at that instant, the brat in her arms gave so piteous a cry that the old man could not find in his heart to play the Pharisee, but, tying his horse to a gate, he endeavoured to raise her from the ditch.

"The woman died in his arms in ten minutes; and so he wrapped the child in her cloak and carried it to a cottage in Coryton, where he paid

the people to bring it up. When the boy was six or seven years old, the Squire had him taken to the Hall, and he there was a dirty errand-boy, as Mrs. Earwig says. But he was a sharp lad, and soon became a great favourite, and the Squire had him taught to read and write. His patron died when he was about nine or ten years old, I should think, leaving him a remembrance in his will, and requesting his daughter to retain him in her service, which she has done; and, it appears to me, she is only obeying her parent when she advances him in it."

"Oh, this gives the case quite another look. How long has the old gentleman been dead?"

"About eighteen years, as near as I can remember. I should tell you he called his foundling John, after himself, and Coryton, from the place where he discovered him."

"I wonder Miss Wyniates has never married," said Miss Forbes, venturing once more to offer a remark.

"Yes, it is strange, with her immense fortune,"

added her mother. "Do you think it is twenty thousand a year, Townley? People say it is."

"Upon my word I should think it must be more. Rents are not what they were; but Miss Wyniates, though she lives in great style and keeps a very large establishment, cannot spend so much as a man, even allowing for extra plunder by servants. I should think she lives upon about half that sum, and puts by the other half."

"I wonder she can contrive to spend so much."

"You will see the state she keeps when you are at Wyniates Hall. She has a deaf aunt for a companion. But, talking of her not marrying—I think it arose principally from her not going out into society, and her not meeting with her equals in this part of the country. Two or three small Squires, besides myself, tried our luck, and all were equally unsuccessful. I believe I had the best chance of the lot; but she did not like me well enough to marry me

for love; and, as my father admitted he could only trace his pedigree with positive accuracy for six generations back, I failed on the only other claim she would admit. Her foible is ancestry, her own forefathers having come over with the Conqueror."

"Upon my word, Townley, you have raised this lady in my estimation. There is much in blood, as poor Forbes used to say."

"Who had little else, I believe," rejoined the husband. He hated to hear the name of his predecessor mentioned. "By the bye," continued Mr. Townley, "Miss Wyniates had two or three lovers besides our rural neighbours. One was a lord, who, to act the condescending part, and reduce himself to a level with the lady, in order that she might not be oppressed with his dignity, told her candidly that his father had been a tradesman, and created a peer for the service he had rendered the Prime Minister of the day in lending him money. Miss Wyniates inquired what had been the trade of his father; and he replied, that of a

butcher. The lady thereupon pointed to a painting of a figure in armour, and exclaimed, 'that man, my ancestor, Sir Cecil Wyniates, at the battle of Agincourt slew sixteen men with his own hand! There *was a butcher* for you! Do you think your greasy parent ever slew so many sheep at one bout? Go to, my lord, you are no match for me.'

"His lordship stared, and did not know what to make of the conclusion; but, at last, he thought it best to put on his hat and depart. However, Mrs. Townley, I have no doubt you will pass your time agreeably at Wyniates Hall, if the heiress escapes a watery grave to-night. For my part, I really feel so alarmed about it, that I shall ride over, or send to inquire in the morning."

Agreeably with his resolution, in the morning Mr. Townley mounted one of his hunters, and directed his course towards Wyniates Hall. His road, after he had got beyond his own grounds, lay for about two miles along a turnpike road, and then he turned off down a

shady lane, gravelled, but cut into ruts, which led to Coryton and Wyniates. After he had followed this for about three miles, he arrived at Ferraby Brook, which now ran full to the bank, rapid and turbid, and had left many signs of its recent excess in the pools which stood in the hollow parts of the fields near its course, and in the damp state of the road and the ground for a considerable distance on either side. The bridge, as if to verify the warning of the groom, had been destroyed all but a narrow strip, which had been bound by the coping-stones, and was stronger than the rest. The remainder had been washed down the stream, and the fragments lay partly in separate stones, partly in masses held together by the mortar scattered below.

Mr. Townley dismounted, and taking the bridle over his horse's head, and himself stepping along the narrow coping, led the animal, after much snorting and reluctance, through the brook. How any one could have managed the night before, in the dusk, and when the water was over

the part which afforded him a path, he could not tell. He more than ever feared there must have been an accident. Perhaps the bridge broke in as the riders attempted to cross it? He quickened his pace, and ere long arrived at the lodge. The gate was not fastened, but still he called at the door, to inquire what time Miss Wyniates got home. Nobody answered; the door was locked, and the house empty.

Mr. Townley, quitting the gravel road for the turf, galloped along the park: but he was obliged to take to the road again, when he came to the wood which embosomed the old hall.

As he got towards the further end of the wood, he heard loud voices of many people, accompanied by a strange thumping noise. In another minute, as he emerged from the trees by the edge of the lake that fronted the house, a strange and unexpected sight met his view! The old Hall lay a heap of ruins.

It had been burnt to the ground: two engines, which had been brought from the distant market-town too late to prevent the evil, were still play-

ing almost uselessly upon the smouldering embers. Mr. Townley now recollected that he had observed a smoke at some distance, but he had supposed it to have arisen from burning weeds. He galloped along the lake-head towards the crowd, and inquired for Miss Wyniates.

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THE PROSPEROUS MAN.

CHAPTER I.

Mr. Townley learnt that the heiress was safe at the Rectory-house, and thither he directed his course without stopping to learn any particulars. When he got there, he found that Miss Wyniates was gone to bed, exhausted with the events and fatigues of the night. He inquired of her maid whether he could be of any service; and the girl said she would ask her mistress, who was not yet asleep. She soon returned with a message, that Miss Wyniates would dress herself, and come and speak to Mr. Townley.

From the Rector and his wife, Mr. Townley collected all the particulars known to them of

the fire: but whilst they were yet in the midst of a glowing account of blazing beams and falling roofs, the heroine of the night entered the room and took their occupation into her own hands. Mr. Townley expressed his congratulation at her personal safety, and his condolence at her loss of the fine old Hall of her ancestors.

"Yes," said Miss Wyniates, "the loss is great —in part, irreparable; but it might have been worse,—Sir Cecil is safe!"

"Indeed!" said Mr. Townley, half-inclined to smile; "that is truly a valuable rescue."

"It is! It is, my dear friend! I must be thankful to God for the safety of the most precious treasure of my house."

"Your life, Miss Wyniates," said the clergyman.

"Not worth having, had Sir Cecil perished! You will be sorry to hear, Mr. Townley, that his armour is destroyed, and our emblazoned pedigree, and my great-grandfather's court-dress, and in short, with the single exception of Sir Cecil, all the truly valuable treasures of my house.

My stupid servants thought only of saving the plate and jewels."

"Your diamonds? They were splendid."

"No,—they are missing, although most of the other things in the same cabinet are saved."

"Ah, that is curious!"

"But I think little of that loss; it can be replaced in time."

"And how did you escape yourself?" inquired Mr. Townley.

"I owe my escape to the same hand that saved my honoured ancestor. How to express my gratitude, I know not;—you must advise me. I think I ought to settle a very considerable annuity on him."

"On whom? Who was it?"

"My groom, John Coryton."

"Indeed! Tell me all the particulars. I do certainly agree with you in the propriety of rewarding him most liberally, and I am sure you will do so."

"I think of settling on him three or four hundred a year. My gratitude would prompt to me

a larger sum ; but, considering his origin and station, I think that will be about right, and perhaps better for him than more."

"I agree with you again—but we shall have time to consider that hereafter. Now, if you are not too fatigued, do tell me how all this happened."

"I will begin from the time of our leaving your hospitable door. We fairly out-galloped the storm you pointed out, till we got within half-a-mile of the brook. It then came on to rain so fast, that we took shelter in a barn. And here I must mention a trait of my faithful squire, just to show you the man's habitual deference to the daughter of his benefactor. As soon as he had assisted me to dismount, and I was under cover, he led the two horses into the barn, and then stood holding their reins, himself outside the door. I asked him why he did not come in? He thanked me, and then came under cover, and there he stood with his hat in his hand the whole time."

"I have often remarked the man's respectful behaviour," said Mr. Townley.

"It has always been the same," continued Miss Wyniates. "Well, the shower abated, and we arrived at the brook. John advanced before me. The flood was high, and the water must have been two or three feet above the path on the bridge: it came to the top of the post. When John got to the middle, his horse fell and rolled over; but they both scrambled out of the water. He then tied his horse to a gate, and returned on foot to lead mine over. But as he came back, he fell again. The bridge was gone from under him. He found, however, by feeling with his feet, a part that remained, but not broad enough for my horse. He therefore said he thought we must turn back, unless I would condescend to allow him to carry me. I did so; and he bore me over in safety. My horse, which we had left at the water's edge,—thinking, I suppose, we were deserting him, and seeing his companion nearer home than himself,—had already begun to ford. When he got to the bridge, he fell, and was a good deal cut and bruised; but John led him out, and we got

home without further adventures. We had had enough.

"I fully intended to have desired my housekeeper to see that John had a hot supper and plenty of brandy and water, that he might not suffer for his gallantry; but I most ungratefully forgot it, as the good lady, when she entered the room, brought me a parcel which I knew contained some documents from the Heralds' College relative to the quarterings of my maternal grandfather. However, to that forgetfulness I probably owe my life."

"Under Providence," interposed the Rector.

"Certainly—I meant that. Always, my good sir, suppose that understood, if I happen to omit mentioning it. Now, had my groom had a hot supper and plenty of brandy and water, it is highly probable he would not have been so wakeful as he was; and to his vigilance and energy I owe the preservation of Sir Cecil and my own life."

"Under Providence," said the Rector.

"You forget, sir, my request. However, I must keep to the order of events. I sat up till about eleven, looking over the papers respecting the bearings of my maternal grandfather, (and very singular they are,) and then I went to wish my aunt good-night, she having been gone to bed before I got home. By the bye, that reminds me, I hope she was not burnt together with the armour of Sir Cecil! Poor dear soul, I never thought of her from that moment to this! Oh dear, I do hope she was saved! She would never hear the noise, she was so deaf. Do, Mr. Eattenhop, be so kind as to send one of your servants to inquire."

"By all means," said the divine, ringing the bell.

A servant was despatched to inquire for tidings of Miss Bridget Wyniates. Her niece pursued her story.

"Well, I went to wish my aunt good-night, as I always do; I am so attached to her! Poor lady, I should be quite miserable if I were to have seen her for the last time! She is of a very advanced age, though, and her faculties are

sadly impaired—and I sometimes think if it would please God to take her, it would be a great comfort. Well, I saw her, and wished her good-night, and she wished me good morning—and I could not help smiling, and she saw that, and called me 'a merry young thing.' Poor woman, perhaps they were her last words! Well, and then I went to bed.

"I suppose I had been asleep less than an hour, when I was awakened by a very loud knocking at my door. I started up in bed, thinking only of thieves, and how I should save my family relics and heir-looms; and I was beginning to offer all my money to ransom them, when the voice of my groom soothed my fears, but increased my surprise. He put the door slightly ajar, and cried: 'Calm yourself, honoured madam, and pardon me; the urgency of the case—'

"'Good heavens,' I cried, 'is the house on fire?'

"'You have time to escape,' he said.

"Even in the hurry and agitation of the moment, I recollected my dress, and desired him to wait

at the door. He begged me to be quick as I valued my life; and I threw my dressing-gown round me, and following him, and lighted by the candle he had brought, advanced along the passage. The front stairs were enveloped in smoke, and we descended by the narrow flight that leads to the servants' hall. I could then see the flames raging in the other wing and the centre of the house. The sparks were flying up, and the whole sky was illuminated. My female servants were rushing down the stairs after us, shrieking; and the men, half-dressed, were running to the different rooms of those who yet slept, unconscious of their situation.

"As soon as I got outside my house on to the lawn, and was entirely safe from personal danger, the thought of Sir Cecil flashed upon my mind. I called out to my servants to rush to the dining-room, and save him. They answered, 'that the room was in flames!' One, however, bolder than the rest, ran round the house, entered the apartment through a window which reached the ground, on the side whence the wind blew, and where

the flames had as yet gained comparatively little power, and, returning unhurt, laid at my feet the palladium of my Hall, the portrait of my mighty forefather! It was John Coryton, who had performed this achievement also! I then offered fifty pounds' reward to any one that could save the cabinet in my dressing-room, which contained my family jewels. A boy who assisted in the stables undertook the exploit; but the most valuable drawer, containing diamonds estimated at several thousand pounds, was wanting; and where it had dropped he knew not."

"He must have pocketed the contents, and thrown the drawer into the flames," observed Mr. Townley.

"I think not," replied Miss Wyniates. "He would not know that their value much exceeded the reward I had offered, and the whole thing was done so instantaneously! and besides, we saw him both go into the house and come out again. He was only out of sight a minute.

"The fire had been raging some time before any one thought of sending to the town for the en-

gines, and, even after my house-steward had despatched a messenger, some hours elapsed, and the flames had almost died of themselves, ere they came. It was an awfully grand sight to see the masses of fire ascend into the dark vault of the night. To me it was one of deep and painful interest. The old gables, with their stone tracery, shone distinct in the light, while along the cloisters, the rich old oak carving, where the arms and crest of the Wyniates were interpersed with their initial letter, again and again repeated, appeared for a moment bright and fresh with the glow of that devouring element, that quickly turned their grotesque imagery into a shapeless mass of charcoal.

"Fancy me, Mr. Townley, standing on my lawn, wrapped in coats and cloaks which had been added to my first hasty dress, surrounded by my servants, and watching the ruin of that which had been the home of my ancestors and my own, which was twined to my heart, which was rooted to my inmost affection by a thousand lofty associations of ancient days, a thousand tender recol-

lections of my own childhood! The roof at length fell in. There was an exclamation of surprise from those around; a cloud of smoke and flame followed the fall. It seemed to me as if the pride of my house was brought low. I remembered that I was the last, lone representative of its once illustrious name. My heart died within me, and I suffered my maids to lead me away from the spot."

Wiss Wyniates here buried her face in her handkerchief, and for the first time gave way to her confessed emotion.

Mr. Townley advanced, pressed her hand soothingly, but did not speak. Mr. Eattenhop took up the thread of her narration: "Yes, Sir, Miss Wyniates never came to our house till four o'clock this morning, though I had sent my duty two hours before, to say I dare not venture out in the night air, having a sore throat—a very severe sore throat, Sir, I assure you, ough, ough, —ever since last Sunday, for our church-stove, Sir, is out of order; and so I sent my duty, and hoped Miss Wyniates would take shelter at

the Rectory; but she never came till four o'clock. The engines, Sir, got to the Hall about five: the fire had then pretty nearly abated, and I should think the supply of water from the lake—."

The clergyman's account was interrupted by the return of the servant who had been sent to inquire the fate of Miss Bridget Wyniates, and who brought word that nobody knew any thing of her, and the general opinion was, that she had perished in the flames.

At this announcement, Miss Wyniates uttered a cry of horror, and left the room. She rushed out of the house, and hurried towards the ruins, commanding search to be made for any thing that could throw light on the fate of her aunt. Mr. Townley followed her, and suggested, in the hope of calming her mind, and not with the belief that it could be so, that perhaps she had fled to a distance, and taken shelter in some of the out-buildings. Miss Wyniates shook her head incredulously, but said, "You are very kind, Mr. Townley, to throw out a straw to my drowning hopes. Poor lady, I fear I

shall see her no more! and, oh, what a dreadful end!"

At these words she broke into violent hysterics, and Mr. Townley supported her back to the Rectory.

All the barns and out-houses were searched without success, and the whole party had no doubt that the unfortunate old lady had perished among the ruins.

Mr. Townley pressed Miss Wyniates to make his house her residence for the present, which she agreed to do; and he rode home to announce to his wife this change of arrangement, and to inform her that she was again to be the hostess instead of the visitor.

CHAPTER II.

THE stables and offices, having been detached from the Hall, escaped untouched. Miss Wyniates was, therefore, as well as ever provided with horses and equipage; but her riding-habit, and indeed all her clothes were destroyed. She accordingly ordered her carriage, and said she should go by the town, although it lengthened the distance from ten miles to nineteen, both because the bridge was destroyed on the other road, and also because she wished to call at her milliner's, and order her to furnish her with articles of apparel of all kinds with all expedition. In the mean time she borrowed a supply of clothes which had enveloped the less graceful figure of Mrs. Eattenhop. She then gave directions for further search to be made for her aunt, and for

the ruins to be carefully examined, in order that her bones might, if they could be found, be removed to a consecrated soil, and to the storied resting-place of all the Wyniates in Coryton Church.

She also commended to the custody of Mr. Eattenhop the rescued image of Sir Cecil, with the assurance that if he would take care of it and preserve it uninjured, till such time as her house should be rebuilt, she should hold herself in his debt to the amount to the next presentation to the living of Great Tytham, of which she was the patroness. Mr. Eattenhop undertook the charge with promises of the greatest care and assurance of the sincerest gratitude, saying, her generosity was the greater, as Mr. Tuber, the present incumbent, was eighty-five, and had been a very free liver. Before she set off, Miss Wyniates desired John Coryton to attend her alone, in another room. She directed him to shut the door, and thus addressed him: "My obligations to you are so great, that I shall have difficulty in paying them. I have consulted Mr. Townley on

the subject, and I propose to settle on you an annuity of £400 a year. I shall convey to that gentleman a sum of money, in trust, to pay you the interest for life to that amount. This will make you independent. I would do more if you had any relations—"

"My birth, Madam,—" interrupted Coryton, turning very red.

"Pardon me, I do not mean to reproach you for a misfortune which I deplore. It is not every one who can boast an illustrious and uninterrupted ancestry, even amongst those in my own station. I alluded to your origin, merely to excuse myself for limiting my payment to your life. Should you marry, I would make a fresh settlement."

"Madam," said Coryton, "I trust you will not think me ungrateful if I decline your offered bounty, and beg for a different reward."

"Let me hear it."

"Allow me to remain your groom; only, give me leave to make a journey into Scotland. I

have long felt shame at my supposed origin, and impulses and instincts are within that tell me, as if from Heaven or from Nature, that I ought not to have been lowly born. The woman to whose house the corpse of my wretched parent was conveyed by the order of your honoured father, my patron and benefactor, has preserved a necklace and a brooch, together with part of a letter, much worn, which I think, under Providence, may guide me to some discovery."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Miss Wyniates, "and why did you never tell me this before? I would have given you the means to have undertaken the journey."

"Alas, Madam, I always dreaded the incredulous smile of your undoubted birth. And yet I often meditated asking the permission, which I feel sure you will grant me now. I have served you humbly and gratefully for many years, Madam: I ask this favour of you on that account, rather than on account of the service which accident only enabled me to render last

night, and which is already more than paid by your kindness in acknowledging it, and by seeing you in safety."

"These sentiments, John Coryton, are indeed those of noble birth, of chivalry. I would fain believe there may be something in the impulse you feel. You shall go to Scotland, and I pray God to prosper your errand!"

"'Thank you, 'thank you, madam."

"But, remember, when you return, you are a servant no more. That dress would mock my ingratitude. Your merits are too great to wear the livery, even of the Wyniates."

"Alas! madam, your intended reward is a punishment. I have grown from a child under the roof of your father and yourself. Must I be dismissed?"

"Nay, since you are so attached to our house, it shall be thus:—you shall live at one of my farms, and you shall be near us—but I could not bear to order you and treat you as a servant any more."

Coryton sighed.

Miss Wyniates proceeded: — "There will be time for definite arrangement afterwards, on your return from Scotland. To-day I am setting off for Mr. Townley's, and have to go round by the town on business. I will leave a cheque for you at my banker's to pay your travelling expenses, and any that you may incur in investigating your family. And now, again thanking you, and wishing you success in your inquiries, I say good-bye."

With these words, Miss Wyniates glided out of the room, and, crossing the entrance-passage, re-entered the one where she had left the Rector and his wife.

As soon as her stately figure was out of sight, the features of the groom relaxed into a subdued laugh; he took two or three rapid turns round the apartment, rubbed his hands joyously together, exclaiming, "'Tis an ill-wind that brings nobody good!" and then seating himself in a chair, he seemed to bury himself in thoughtful calculations.

The carriage of Miss Wyniates drew up to

the door, and she was not long in reaching the town and her milliner; nor did she omit to call at her banker's, where she deposited all of her plate and jewels that was saved, and left a cheque for £200 for her faithful groom.

She proceeded on to Mr. Townley's, and was received by him with real pleasure, and with much outward sign of welcome by his wife and daughter.

Her spirits were a good deal affected by the thoughts of the shocking end of her aged companion, of which she no longer could entertain a doubt; and she reproached herself bitterly with her neglect in not making inquiry for her at the earliest alarm. The loss, too, of the house, to which she was so romantically attached, and which seemed to her mind to typify the extinction of her own immediate branch of the family, was a subject of bitter regret. The mere work of the mason and the carpenter a few of her stored thousands would replace; but what art, what magic could recall each hallowed locality, each treasured relic!

Mr. Townley exerted himself to console, and tried to beguile her grief on that account by such arguments as occurred to his mind: — "You can build up the old place again, my dear Miss Wyniates, on the old foundations—you can embody no inconsiderable part of the old walls. It will be the old Hall once more! Now, suppose you had papered a room, or put up a new wainscot, it would still have been the very same apartment. Had you altered a door, and moved a chimney, you would not have destroyed the identity of the place. Nor will you do so by carrying the change to a little further extent. Some of the walls will be old, some new. It is the same house, as much as the old oak-tree on the lawn is the same with the one your great-grandfather planted, although the leaves are changed every year, although the wood undergoes a constant succession, although there are twenty vast branches where he left only one single slight slip, although many mighty arms are torn away! When you step out of

your door-way, will not your feet press the same lawn as was trodden by the renowned Sir Cecil, when he returned victorious from the vanquished plains of France? Nothing is eternal, or even permanent, but all life is change and succession, as the Pythagoreans taught of old. The family of the Wyniates exists, but the representatives have changed and will change. Of that celebrated stream you are the present wave—"

"Bless me, Townley, what a fine harangue!" exclaimed his wife.

Mr. Townley was going to have replied to this interruption, when a servant entered and delivered a letter to him.

Having read it, he told Miss Wyniates that "he thought certainty was better than uncertainty, and that she would have an opportunity of paying the last respect to the remains of her relative. The letter was from Mr. Eattenhop, and announced that the body had been discovered among that part of the ruins which lay beneath the portion of the building wherein had been the room occupied by the deceased,

and that he waited Miss Wyniates' orders as to which day she would appoint for the funeral, and would take all arrangements on himself."

Miss Wyniates requested Mr. Townley to write to Mr. Eattenhop, and fix the time; and then she retired to her room to give way to her grief for the poor old lady's fate. To have lost her by a natural end would almost have been a relief and a blessing to both parties; but the manner in which her long life had terminated added to the usual horror of the Prince of Terrors.

When the day for the funeral arrived, Mrs. Townley and Miss Forbes requested to be allowed to join the ceremony of paying the last honours to the relative of their visitor and friend. Their real motive was curiosity, and a wish to seize the good opportunity of seeing the monuments and vault of the Wyniates, which they had heard were very remarkable. Mr. Townley at once guessed their reason, but, in the hopes that Miss Wyniates, instead of doing so, would look

upon their offer as an act of attention, he joined in their request.

The party set out in two carriages, and met the mourning-coaches and the hearse at the Rectory. They found arrived also two or three distant relations of the younger branch of the house of Wyniates, and, amongst the number, the heir-expectant of the family estates. He was a young man who had been originally educated for the Church, in the hope that his relative would present him to the living of Great Tytham or some other piece of preferment; but on his father's dying before he was ordained, and at a time when the prospect that Miss Wyniates would never marry was becoming pretty plain, he had given up all idea of a calling to which he felt conscious he was little called, and lived by ekeing out his small patrimony with Israelitish gold, supplied to him at most usurious interest, on the faith of his future possessions. His real object in attending the funeral was to have ocular demonstration of the heiress's health and appearance; and he had gladly embraced the opportunity of her invitation

to 'her cousin' to be present on the occasion. He was a complete voluptuary, and the natural elegance of his form had been sacrificed to his love of indulgence. The cousins had not met for many years.

Continual wishes that such were the case had impressed on the mind of Walter Wyniates the idea that Augusta was much older and feebler than he now found her to be. Seeing a graceful and erect form, with features very regular, and the deportment of a lady of considerable elegance and but little past the prime of life, he began to consider whether it would not conduce more to his comfort if he were to possess himself of the family property at once,—*the incumbrance* being so much less objectionable, and the otherwise probable delay so much greater, than he had hitherto believed. He accordingly resolved to play the agreeable, and he offered his condolence with an air which he meant to be tender and touching; but the effort was so unnatural to him, he had associated so much with bon-vivants and companions of life and spirit, that the attempt was a failure, and the heartlessness

of his sentiments and the hollowness of his words were too apparent:—

"'Pon my soul, my fair cousin, I am sorry, deuced sorry, for your loss. I feel this sad calamity on your account, believe me—entirely on your account. I did not know the old girl, not from Eve; so should not care if she had to be toasted over again, (as perhaps she may,) had she not been dear to you, for whom I have all the affection of our near relationship."

Miss Wyniates was disgusted with such shallow flattery, and merely replied, "Certainly, I ought to feel very grateful, Sir, for your bestowing all your regard on me, to the exclusion of one with whom you must have had about the same acquaintance as with myself, and to whom you were one degree nearer in those ties which you value so much."

"Caught a tartar, egad! I think I had better wait my turn," muttered the unskilful sensualist, as Miss Wyniates turned from him to receive the condolence of other friends.

When all were assembled, the procession moved

from the Rectory towards the church, to the heavy tolling of the bell. They entered the sacred edifice, and the solemn ceremony proceeded; the coffin was lowered into the vault, the dust was mingled with the dust.

Miss Forbes knelt next to her mother: "Have you got your bottle of salts, mama?" she whispered.

"Here," said the lady, whispering too, as if she was repeating the service, but addressing her daughter: "take it, my love; but you may go into the vault without fear. The old lady's body underwent a fiery purification, and it is a long time since there was a funeral amongst these people before. My dear, put your head a little nearer. Do you know, the fat young man in the corner of the pew is the heir to all this!"

"La, now! why did you not tell me before. I have been avoiding him."

"What a pity! Townley told me just before we left the parson's house."

"Hush, mama! The clergyman keeps looking at us."

"I see he does.—'In the hopes of a joyful resurrection. Amen.'"

The last words were pronounced in a louder whisper than the rest, and with the voice directed towards her neighbour on the other side.

The service being over, the party assembled examined the monuments and descended into the vault. In the latter the coffins were in great preservation. The crimson, the purple, the black velvet retained their original hue, and the silver scutcheons bore their family arms untarnished. Among the monuments, the two of the greatest interest were that of the renowned Sir Cecil, and one of still more ancient date, a knight whose legs were crossed in token of his having been to Holy Land; and whose epitaph had been inscribed in the days when the orthography of the family was still unsettled, so that his name appeared to have been Henrie de Wynyatt. Before each of these monuments, Mrs. Townley observed that Miss Wyniates made a reverential bow, whilst she passed by the plain slab of

her father with a comparatively slight token of respect.

Miss Forbes begged Mr. Walter Wyniates would "be so kind as to decypher the old English letters on the most ancient of the monuments, as gentlemen understood those sort of things." The heir presumptive replied, with a shrug of his shoulders, that "old English was quite out of the question, it was so unsightly. To know English at all was the utmost he could boast;" in which he verified the proverb that "*many a true word is spoken in jest.*"

Mrs. Townley, raising her head out of the vault, perceived that her daughter had broken the ice, and nodded to her with a smile of maternal approbation. She took an opportunity of asking Mr. Townley to invite the heir to their house, as it would be a delicate attention to their amiable guest.

And to the amiable Miss Forbes, thought Mr. Townley, at once perceiving the motive. However, as he had not happened to observe Miss Wyniates' unfavourable interview with her rela-

tive, and moreover had no wish to thwart his daughter-in-law's chance of promotion, (the rather as he himself might thereby be relieved from her presence,) he promised to do so; and he had an opportunity of giving the invitation at the elegant collation set out by Mrs. Eattenhop. It was accepted, and Mr. Walter Wyniates made one of the party on their return to his house.

Mr. Townley was going to have placed that gentleman in the same carriage with his relative, but Miss Wyniates begged to alter the arrangement, and to have him himself for her companion, as she had much to say to him on the subject of the rebuilding of the Hall. This she took an opportunity as they drove along of telling Mr. Townley was a mere excuse, her real reason being the antipathy she had conceived against her cousin on account of his introductory address. Mr. Townley now regretted having invited him to Beech House, and promised not to press him to prolong his stay. Meantime the subject of their unflattering conversation was treated in a much

more favourable manner in the other carriage by Miss Forbes, on whom her mother, feeling dreadfully sleepy, as she alleged, with having taken two glasses of Mr. Eattenhop's Edinburgh ale, devolved the whole charge of entertaining their new acquaintance.

CHAPTER III.

Beech House was the very reverse of Wyniates Hall; it was a modern mansion, of considerable size and somewhat formal appearance, of a square or rather oblong shape, such as prevailed in the reign of George the Third, and had in fact been built by the father of the present owner, who had pulled down the more picturesque, but smaller building, that had previously stood on the same site. The drawing-room became the chief resort of Mr. Walter Wyniates; for, after the first day, Mr. Townley, finding him a most uncongenial guest, betook himself to his field-sports and his out-of-doors occupations; whilst Mrs. Townley, whose game it was to make her visit agreeable to Miss Wyniates, in order that there might be a reason for detaining her cousin, sat hour after

hour in the library, listening to the chivalrous doings of the Wyniates of old, and occasionally matching them with the ancestors of her sainted Forbes. Her daughter, therefore, had still the duty of amusing the heir-expectant, and he found his time pass far more agreeably with her than it would have done amongst Mr. Townley's dogs and horses. Hunting he considered the occupation of Bedlamites, shooting he voted a toil of a pleasure, fishing was fatiguing and dull at once; and as for riding over the farm—what pleasure could there be in looking at manure-heaps, pigs, red-handed and pudding-cheeked milk-maids, and uncouth Melibœuses in blue smock-frocks? Was it not far more delightful to enjoy the refined society of a modern belle, to look at the *recherché* album of Miss Forbes, or to lie on the sofa and gaze on her figure as she displayed it before him, twining in a Spanish dance to the tune of her clinking castanets? It is true, the shape of Maria Forbes was somewhat bony and angular; the outline wanted the graceful play of the curve, the voluptuous and gradual *crescendo* of the swelling

bust, and the softness of the slendering waist, "small by degrees, and beautifully less." But still there was the charm of youth about her, the influence of high spirits, and the attraction of the wish to please. Besides, there was no rival. In a ball-room Miss Forbes would have barely reached the average of beauty; at a lonely house in the country she monopolized the attentions of Walter Wyniates.

About a fortnight had elapsed since the fire at the Hall, when Miss Wyniates received a letter with the Perth post-mark, of which the following is a copy:

"Honoured Madam,

"The interest you were pleased to take in the success of my inquiry after my parents must be my excuse for my presumption in writing to one, who, however my situation may change, must ever be my superior.

"Allow me, Madam, before I tell you what discoveries I have made, to return you once

more my humble thanks for your goodness to me. The education your honoured father gave me, and the improvement I had opportunity to make in your service, will be of the greatest benefit to me, if I succeed in proving my birth. And your bounty in supplying the money for my journey, I shall regard, under Providence, as the means of my rise in life.

"Madam, I proceed next to trouble you with what I have done. The letter found in my poor mother's pocket contained the names of several people living in or about Starn, which I have found a small village in Perthshire. I have seen many of the people named, but some are dead. If I can find one of the name of Wallace Campbell, I shall be enabled to show my father was Baliol Gordon, a gentleman by birth, though of small property. He is supposed to have gone to London to prosecute a claim to an estate in right of his wife, but to have died there about the time I was born, almost of starvation; and I conclude my poor mother was finding her way back to her friends, when

she was discovered in that miserable dying state by your honoured father. It is a shocking thing for gentlefolks, apart from their being my parents, to have undergone such sufferings, Madam.

"I am to see Mr. Gordon of Starn-loch to-morrow, and we expect to hear something of Wallace Campbell soon. When I do, I shall presume on writing again, and in the mean time,

"Am your most humble servant,

"JOHN CORYTON."

Miss Wyniates showed Mr. Townley the letter, and that gentleman could not but admire the free round hand, the correctness of the spelling, and the style, which, considering the opportunities the writer had had, he thought very creditable. Miss Wyniates assured him that, "if her groom had fewer opportunities than he would have had, had he been born in a more elevated station in life, he had not failed to take advantage of all that had come in his

way. He had made himself a very superior person: her father had had him at a very early age well grounded in the rudiments of plain and useful learning, and the village-schoolmaster had found him so apt a scholar that he had still continued to advise and assist him in his studies after he had ceased to attend his school. She had herself lent him books, in addition to his own, as her housekeeper had told her that he missed no day wherein he did not read and write, and that he spent no little portion of his wages in books, which she ascertained were of a better kind than a common servant would have selected. He was so accomplished that he became the scribe of the servants' hall, and read and replied to all the maids' love-letters, and helped her (the housekeeper) to keep her accounts."

Less than a week intervened between the receipt of the above letter and the arrival of another. It bore the same post-mark as the former, but was sealed with a coat of arms; and, on opening it, Miss Wyniates found it

signed, "John Gordon." The hand-writing she had thought was Coryton's, but she supposed it must be that of the relative whom he had mentioned, till the tenour of the letter itself undeceived her. It ran as follows:

"HONOURED MADAM,

"Thanks to you, I am almost proved to be what I am. In a few days I shall have legal proof; but now all the Gordon family acknowledge me. We happily found Wallace Campbell, who had once been my father's bailiff, and it is all clear.

"My father's property was sold, but Mr. Gordon of Starn-loch undertakes to support me till my mother's is recovered in England, and to allow me a hundred a year till then. Therefore, honoured Madam, I must decline your settlement, or only receive what you give me as a loan, with your permission, as it would not become me now that I know I am a man of birth to be pensioned out of our family.

"Mr. Gordon has shown me our family-tree, whereby we come from Ralph de Gourdain, who fought for King William the Conqueror; and one of his family settled in Scotland at Starn-loch, and they have lived there ever since; but the French name has changed into Gordon.

"I am going to London soon about my mother's property, and as I may have to stay long there, I should wish, Madam, to call and pay my respects to you, if Mr. Townley will allow me, and will not be offended at my not going up to the kitchen-door, which would not do as regards my relations.

"Your grateful and most humble Servant,

"Madam,

"JOHN GORDON."

On being shown this letter, Mr. Townley, with the consent of Miss Wyniates, wrote to her late groom, saying, she would be happy to see him and hear all the particulars of his discovery and prospects, and that he should receive him as a gentleman, and not in the capacity in which

he had, through misfortune, hitherto lived, but wherein he had conducted himself with so much credit. But, he added, he should, if he preferred it, take his meals during his stay in a separate room, as he might not feel comfortable at sitting down with himself and family, and being waited on by servants, all of whom had known him in a different situation.

This letter being sent off to Starn-loch, Miss Wyniates waited with some impatience the appearance of the descendant of Ralph de Gourdain. She theorized to Mr. Townley on the mysterious influence of blood, and the manner in which it was sure to show itself, however obscured. Mr. Townley quoted her some instances of illustrious names, disgraced by the degeneracy of the modern representatives; but these Miss Wyniates only allowed to be exceptions to her rule, and Mr. Townley found it quite vain to pursue the argument.

The news of Coryton's advancement had, through the servants, spread to Wyniates and his native village, between which place and Beech

House a constant and almost daily intercourse was established during Miss Wyniates' visit at the latter place; and the rumour prevailed that he was coming back in state. It was this rumour that procured Miss Wyniates a visitor. She was informed that a person wanted to see her in private, and she found it was a young woman whom she knew very well by sight, as the daughter of a small farmer in Coryton, a tenant of her own. She knew also that Margaret had disgraced her family by having recently had an illegitimate child, the father of which she had always obstinately refused to name. As she looked on the beautiful girl, who held in her arms the cause of her shame, and stood blushing and agitated before her, the haughty heiress inquired, what might be the business of Margaret Brownsword with Miss Wyniates?

The trembling girl with a faltering tongue disclosed the object of her errand: it was to intreat Miss Wyniates to use her influence with John Coryton not to desert her now that he was become a great gentleman. "She had relied," she

said, "on his promise of marriage, which he had broken on the plea of fear of offending his lady; but he had always assured her that he would one day make her his wife, whenever he had sufficient means, on the condition that in the mean time she would not betray his conduct." She admitted that he had, after her father had turned her out of doors, paid for her lodging at a neighbour's, and given her money for her support. "Nay," she added, "before he went to the north, he had left her a considerable sum, which would last till his return and even longer; but still she very much feared, if he turned gentleman and lived in Scotland, she should never see him again, and that would break her heart."

Miss Wyniates expressed her indignation at his behaviour, and, after bestowing a proper reproof on Margaret's own ill conduct, she promised to do every thing she could to induce Coryton, or, as she must now call him, Mr. Gordon, to make her all the reparation in his power, and with this assurance she dismissed the poor suppliant, a little consoled.

When Mr. Townley heard the story, he could hardly resist the temptation of indulging in some taunting remark on the conduct of the descendant of De Gourdain; but Miss Wyniates appeared to feel so angry and so much hurt at the circumstance, that he was led to restrain himself.

Mr. Walter Wyniates was not equally forbearing. He had conceived a violent dislike to Coryton on account of his having been the means of prolonging the life of the heiress. He would not indeed have set fire to the house himself, nor would he have *actively* engaged in the destruction of the party who stood between him and his lofty inheritance; but he would have rejoiced, by whatever other means, to have been put into possession thereof, free from risk. His cousin might yet marry—and might have a son—though it was highly improbable. Two strong motives—namely, hatred of Coryton and a vivid sense of his own interest—quickened his naturally slow mind, and aroused his anxious suspicion. The thought had occurred to him that perhaps Miss Wyniates

might bestow her hand on her preserver, now that she found him her equal in ancestry. He had suggested this idea to Mr. Townley, as they sat one day taking their wine after the ladies had retired from the dinner-table. The decided manner in which that gentleman had rejected the notion, and pronounced it impossible, with all the authority of his long acquaintance with Miss Wyniates, who, he said, would never marry any one that was not a gentleman in *all* respects, had eased his fears without entirely removing them. It was with singular pleasure, therefore, that he heard of this new flaw in the late groom's character, and he rejoiced that his offence was one which to an old maid would appear especially unpardonable. He made constant allusions to it, and talked of writing the history of the 'amours of the village maid and the great De Gourdain disguised as a groom.'

The very day after the one on which Miss Wyniates had received the above inauspicious disclosure, a chaise drove up to the door. It was Mr. Gordon! He inquired for Miss Wyniates, and

learning that she was walking in the pleasure-grounds alone, he set out in quest of her. He followed a walk which led him within sight of a small summer-house, and which there divided to go round it in a ring. As the walk led nowhere else, and the summer-house was in a most secluded spot, thickly surrounded with tall trees and evergreen shrubs, that shut out all external view, it was called by the family "The World's End." At the further extremity, beyond the summer-house, the traveller beheld his late mistress, pacing to and fro, with her eyes fixed on the ground. He paused, regarded her with a scrutinizing glance, and seemed lost in thought, and doubtful whether to advance.

Miss Wyniates raised her eyes and saw a stranger; for, in his altered attire, she knew not her late groom. He was dressed in the plain and *unremarkable* style of a gentleman, except only that he wore a waistcoat of the tartan.

As the stranger advanced, she recognised him, and, uttering an exclamation of agreeable surprise, put out her hand; but, in a moment, recollecting

the story of the child, she drew it back, raised her form to its stateliest height, and returned his low salute with a formal bow.

Mr. Gordon looked much embarrassed, and inquired, "in what manner he had been so unfortunate as to displease his benefactress? He saw something was amiss, but was guiltless of intentional offence, and unconscious of having committed any. Indeed he had been led by Mr. Townley's polite invitation to believe she had taken his letters in good part, though he was aware of his presumption in having written."

"Mr. Gordon," said Miss Wyniates, "I did take your letters in good part. I did indeed rejoice at their contents and sympathize in your success. I did indeed look to receiving you back as an equal, as a high-born friend. I joined in the invitation Mr. Townley sent—but—but—"

"But—what? what? Oh, Madam, quick! Relieve my suspense."

"Since that letter was sent, I have learnt your — I know not how to speak it."

"Nay, honoured lady, if you delay out of

compassion to me, I beg you to speak. I have been poor and humble, but I defy the world to show I have done any thing to disgrace the name of Gordon!"

"Is it then, Sir, no disgrace to bring shame — my female delicacy must borrow a poet's phrase—to

"win maiden's breast,
"Ruin and leave her?"

"Ha, Madam! who has told you this falsehood? I deny it. Name my accuser."

"Margaret Brownsword!"

"Good! Good! You mean the poor farmer's daughter of Coryton. I know the girl by sight, Madam, and I have known too of her unfortunate situation; — but can you believe, Madam, that I am the author of her shame? I, who for years have felt the impulse of my birth in my blood? I—"

"Nay, Sir, the young woman told me this herself. She came with her child in her arms to tell me, to beg me to urge you to repair the wrong by marriage,—which I undertook to do!"

"I would lay down my life at your bidding,

Miss Wyniates. I owe all *I have*, all *I am* to you and yours; but you have done me injustice here. Even when I knew not what I was, my heart yearned on high. Your maids endeavoured to captivate their supposed equal, the daughters of the villagers smiled as I passed; even this false woman, whom you have named, has often turned her eye upon me. I despised their coarse forms, their rough hands, their rural speech. I looked higher,—yet I was humble at the same time. I felt that there was one whom it was better to serve at the most reverential distance, whom to see was a blessing; to hear whose voice, even in the tone of command, was music; to touch the sole of whose shoe, as she mounted her horse—"

"John Coryton! Mr. Gordon!" exclaimed Miss Wyniates, amazed.

"Hear me, Madam. You have accused me, and this is part of my defence. I would show the utter *impossibility* of the charge being true. I should have considered myself contaminated by contact with these low people, such feelings had I within me! I should have looked upon my-

self as a traitor to that lofty being on whom I had fixed my devotion, hopeless as it was, had any viler one distracted a thought. Unexpectedly Fortune smiles, and then first you hear this charge. This young woman has been, to my knowledge, long in this disgraceful situation: I was never accused till I became a party supposed able to pay. The charge is too evidently made for the occasion for me to have regarded it, had not you believed it, you—you to whom I have been used from my youth to look up,—you whom I now regard as a being too good and too high for me to risk offending by any other than the lowliest, the most distant worship; I mean in my sober moments, for, in the first intoxication of my discovered ancestry, I will not say how I presumed to equalize myself, and to dream what, in a waking thought, would have been blasphemy."

"Mr. Gordon, I will not say it would have been so, but for this charge against you. Your duty and respect, your long observance were not unmarked. My life I owe to you, and the preser-

vation of that treasure which I have ever valued most highly. When at length you became aware of your honourable origin, I triumphed in the fulfilment of your aspirations, and the knowledge that my faithful servant had been changed into my equal awoke ideas which this young woman's story could but ill suppress."

"Madam," said Gordon, "let me be confronted with my accuser, and if she does not retract her story, or I do not disprove it, banish me with disgrace from your sight. But if I stand clear of this charge, then throw the wish, which I am sure you will feel to recompense me for its injustice, into the scale with those merits you have been pleased to allow, and reward me according to your own generosity."

"Be it so, then," replied Miss Wyniates. "I am loath to think you capable of such baseness; yet the direct testimony against you left me little choice to doubt."

"Thank you, Madam; I feel no fear for the result. When I have cleared myself from this charge, I will lay before you the full particulars of

my discoveries in Scotland: till I am cleared, and whilst I am suspected, I will not presume to intrude on your presence further. I will send early in the morning to Coryton, for the young woman to attend you here; and, lest she should persist in a tale which she has once alleged, I will request one or two others of her family and neighbours, who have been much with her, to come and state whether they ever saw me in her company."

"Do so, John—I beg your pardon, Mr. Gordon. My wishes would prompt me to believe your bare word, and to say all this is unnecessary, but the charge ought to be refuted, and there are those here who think it true."

"It *shall* be refuted, Madam," said Gordon, and then bowing respectfully, he returned the way he came, and entered the house.

He inquired of a servant whether Mr. Townley was within; and, finding that he was, he sent his respects, and begged to speak a word to him. Mr. Townley received him coldly, and

Mr. Gordon said he was aware he was labouring under a most serious charge; hoped he would suspend his judgment till the morrow, and then have the kindness to send some one over to Coryton to desire the attendance of Margaret Brownsword, her sister, and a young woman who lived next door to her. Mr. Townley promised to do so; and Mr. Gordon further begged the loan of a horse to ride as far as the market-town and back, as, by mistake, some of his papers and documents had been left in the chaise which had brought him thence, and which had returned; and also because he wished to speak to an attorney there, whom he had consulted before he set out for Scotland. He said, that, on his return in the evening, he should confine himself to his room, and not present himself before Mr. Townley or Miss Wyniates till he met his accuser face to face. Mr. Townley merely said he hoped the charge would be disproved, and a horse was at his service; and with that answer, Mr. Gordon retired to a room to which a servant conducted him, and

waited there till he was informed the horse was ready which Mr. Townley had ordered for him.

Early on the following morning, Mr. Townley dispatched a messenger to Coryton with directions from Miss Wyniates for the parties required to attend him at Beech House. One of that lady's servants was to bring them in an old phaeton, which was kept at the stables at the Hall for the use of her household. About twelve o'clock Mr. Gordon received a message to say the persons expected were arrived, and his presence was requested. He was shown into a room where Miss Wyniates and Mr. Townley were seated. He bowed lowly to the former, and saluted the latter with some formality. Mr. Townley desired the young women might be shown in. Margaret Brownsword entered leaning on her sister's arm, and looking excessively pale. The neighbour followed them. As soon as Margaret's eye discovered in what part of the room Mr. Gordon was stationed, it was turned quickly away, and remained steadily averted the whole time. Mr.

Gordon, addressing Mr. Townley, said he should prefer having only one of the young women in the room at once, as was usual in investigations where there was a possibility of contradictions. To this Mr. Townley assented, and inquired which two he would wish should retire. He said he thought Margaret had better remain, and the other two accordingly left the room.

" Margaret Brownsword," said Miss Wyniates, as the door closed, " repeat in a word the name of the father of your child."

She was silent.

After a pause, Mr. Townley spoke:—" Young woman, you have brought forward a serious charge,—you have affected the character of a person now become of consequence. Was what you said to Miss Wyniates true or false?"

Still was she silent.

" Answer," said Mr. Gordon. Margaret sighed heavily, and, addressing Miss Wyniates, she said, " I withdraw the charge!"

Miss Wyniates turned towards Gordon; their eyes met.

"You *withdraw* the charge?" said Mr. Townley. "Do you also *retract* it? Was it false?"

"Nay, my friend," interrupted Miss Wyniates, "do not press the unfortunate young woman. She has committed two grievous sins, first against female propriety, secondly against this gentleman. But, surely, now that she withdraws her accusation, she admits its falsehood, and makes all the atonement in her power. Do not then be severe upon her, nor require her to characterize her own misconduct in harder terms. We know not what undue influence may have been used with her and overpowered her sense of truth when she made the charge."

"Excellent woman! Noble and exalted sentiments!" exclaimed Gordon.

"But still," continued Mr. Townley, "I would have a direct—"

He was interrupted by Gordon rushing towards Margaret Brownsword, and crying, "She is fainting. Pray, Sir, ring the bell." At the same time he supported her in his arms.

Mr. Townley was going to ring the bell, when

Margaret said, "No, I am not fainting, only a little sick."

"The air will restore you," said Gordon, leading her to the door. He took her outside and left her with her sister, and returned, bringing into the room the young woman who had accompanied them.

"This, Madam," he said, "is the next-door neighbour to farmer Brownsword. Allow me to ask her, whether she ever had reason to believe I was much acquainted with his daughter."

Mary Silvester said she had lived all her life most intimately with the Brownswords, and never saw John Coryton there but once, and that was a long time ago; and she did not think he had spoken twenty words to the two daughters between them. Margaret had certainly had a lover, but nobody knew who it was.

Mr. Gordon said he did now recollect that he had been in Brownsword's house, as the young woman stated, and that it was to bear a message from Miss Wyniates herself about his greyhounds, which she wanted to borrow for Mr. Townley on

the occasion of his visiting there. It was a long time ago, and he had forgotten it till Mary Silvester reminded him.

Mr. Townley remembered having borrowed a farmer's dogs, but remarked that Mary's evidence only proved the slightness of her acquaintance with her neighbours, and would acquit any one and every one as well as Mr. Gordon.

Miss Wyniates observed that she thought Mr. Townley pressed the matter unfairly, and that her own mind was made up. She then desired the young woman to withdraw, and, as soon as the door closed, she advanced to Mr. Gordon, took his hand, and, then turning to Mr. Townley, thus addressed him: "My excellent friend, I yesterday made Mr. Gordon a promise conditional on the result of this inquiry. To my mind it is most clear and satisfactory, and I am sure it would be the same to yours, had you known him so well as I have. Coupling my own observation of him during his whole life with the answers we have received, I have no doubt this young woman has been persuaded into making a false charge. I

promised to requite him for my belief of it, when it should be shown to be untrue; at the same time, I am proving my gratitude to the preserver of my life; and I believe that I am also consulting well for my own interests in confiding them to a protector, whose devotedness has endured for years, and whose descent in a singular manner corresponds in antiquity with my own."

Mr. Townley was far from being so well satisfied as Miss Wyniates of Gordon's innocence of the charge; at the same time, though he by no means thought the offence a venial one, he was more ready to excuse it than she would have been, had she continued to believe it; and he thought other reparation could be made without going the length of requiring a gentleman to atone for a servant's amours by marriage. When therefore he saw that the mind of the lady was made up, he put the best face he could upon the matter, and told Mr. Gordon that his house was always open to the friends of Miss Wyniates, and he hoped he would make it his home as long as

might be convenient or agreeable. Gordon acknowledged his kindness with a profusion of thanks.

The morning was spent in looking over the pedigree, and hearing his explanation of his claim to his mother's property. Mr. Walter Wyniates, finding the turn things were taking, and unable to conceal his vexation, took his leave, declaring he could not sit down at the same board with a low fellow redolent of the stable, but promising to return to his interesting Maria as soon as he thought the groom was gone. It may be imagined that the loss of her lover did not dispose Miss Forbes to look upon the cause of it with the most favourable eye.

Altogether there was so great an air of constraint about his hosts, that, notwithstanding their outward civility, Mr. Gordon was but ill at ease. Miss Wyniates, also, on his account, began to feel less at home, and to consider they were become intruders. She therefore the more willingly consented to abridge the time and to appoint an earlier period than the one she had at first fixed

for bestowing upon Mr. Gordon the hand which was to be the reward of his many services.

Many days did not elapse before the license was procured. The Townleys once more escorted Miss Wyniates to Coryton. Mr. Eattenhop set before the party a substantial breakfast, and then adjourned with them to the church, where he pronounced John Gordon, otherwise Coryton, and Augusta Wyniates to be man and wife.

The newly-married pair set out for London, where Mr. Gordon was to take the necessary steps for assuming the name of Wyniates in addition to his own; and they were thence to proceed on a tour, from which it was arranged they should return in a few months to superintend the rebuilding of Wyniates Hall.

CHAPTER IV.

MUCH did Miss Forbes wonder her swain did not return! Much did Mrs. Townley express her surprise that Mrs. Wyniates did not fulfil her promise of writing them an account of her tour! The young lady, alas! was destined to pine with hope deferred, till it finally died away into a shadow, and she began to hint to her mama that Beech House was a dull spot, and Cheltenham, she thought, must be filling. If the daughter's lover, however, tarried away, the mother's expected letter arrived at last. It came full half a year after the marriage, and was neither so long nor so communicative as she wished and expected. It was to the following effect:—

"My dear Mrs. Townley,

"I fully anticipated that long ere this we should have returned to your neighbourhood, and have been marking the progress of the restoration of dear, dear Wyniates. But, unluckily, Mr. Wyniates has fallen in love with a place here in Wales, and bought it; and the consequence is, that all my ready money will be absorbed in the purchase, and that will occasion some delay in our executing the fondest wish of my heart. It is a most lovely spot certainly, called Barbican Villa, and belonged to Lord Barbican, whose father built it for the Dowager house. His Lordship's own domains join us, and are very fine. He is a man of immense wealth, and his residence, Gotham Castle, is much admired. He would be a happy man but for the thought (as he told Wyniates in my hearing) that his title will die with him. He has a niece, however—Miss Adeline Barbican, quite a young girl, who will inherit his enormous possessions. Indeed, she is so mere a child, that Wyniates plays and romps with

her as though she were his daughter. She is a very good horsewoman, however, and they two are so venturesome, that I fear frequently that they will leave me behind in some of our rides with a broken neck.

"I talk to you of these people, because I hope you and dear Mr. Townley, and your daughter, will become acquainted with them, as in these days of locomotion I trust the distance will not deter you from visiting us next summer. We are going abroad in the mean time, as Wyniates says his health requires a temporary change of climate, and I too am far from being strong: in truth, I have never felt the same as I used to be, since I beheld the dear old Hall in flames!

"From what I saw whilst I was under your hospitable roof, I was led to believe that my cousin, Mr. Walter Wyniates, admired your accomplished daughter. Should you think me inquisitive if I inquired, whether there is a prospect of our becoming related?

"I hope to hear from you before we leave

England, and I shall write to you from the Rhine.

"Your sincere friend,

"AUGUSTA GORDON WYNIATES."

Mrs. Townley read this letter aloud to her husband. To her it seemed on the whole tolerably satisfactory, while to her daughter it afforded the prospect of a trip to Wales. But to Mr. Townley it wore a different aspect. He was disgusted with the selfishness of Mr. Wyniates in laying out the money of his wife, of that wife to whom he owed all he had in the world, on a capricious fancy of his own, instead of giving way to her natural and well-known desire of having the old mansion of her forefathers restored. Alas! Mr. Townley little knew how small a part the want of attention to her wishes formed of the cruel ill-treatment she received!

The pride of the lofty heiress prompted her to conceal her sorrow! She bore her husband's altered behaviour not patiently, but she com-

plained only to him! The world heard not of her wrongs. But the secret arrow rankled in her heart; she knew not peace nor rest. Her health sunk, her mind was unsettled at times, even her reason wavered. She reproached Wyniates with his neglect; she contrasted his former devotion with his present coldness; she compared his attentions to Miss Barbican, his undisguised preference of her company, with his indifference to her own. She upbraided him with his gallantry to so mere a child; and the taunting answer that there certainly was a very great difference in years and appearance between that young lady and Mrs. Gordon Wyniates drove her almost to phrensy.

It was a relief in that respect when they set out on their tour. They travelled over the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Germany, and returned to England after an absence of between eight and nine months. Mrs. Wyniates was much surprised that her husband should propose leaving the metropolis and setting out for Wales

after only a few days' stay, without remaining in town to pursue the claim of his mother's property, and inquired of him when he intended doing so.

"My mother's property!" exclaimed Wyniates. "Good! Thanks to your preference, I am enabled to do without any but my own!"

"But, surely, you would still have your rights, were it merely for justice-sake?"

"I fear, all she had in the world would not pay law-expenses," replied Wyniates.

"And yet you thought differently once—at least, you said so!"

"I should be glad if that were the only untruth I have to answer for! The descendant of all the Wyniates (to speak at length with truth, and with that candour and confidence which should subsist between man and wife, and to put an end to that system of concealment which could not be carried on longer without further falsehood and more trouble) has married the offspring of a Scotch beggar-woman, whose whole worldly possessions were the clothes on her back, a necklace, a brooch, and a portion of tobacco wrapped up in

an old letter; which last certainly, in skilful hands, was a valuable piece of paper."

"Was not her name Gordon, then?"

"Mine, madam, is Wyniates."

"Impostor! Have I been deceived?"

"A little. The great heiress certainly has bestowed her very mature charms on a person of low and questionable origin."

"Merciful Heaven! is it so? Man! Monster! Fiend! Can this be true? Have I indeed surrendered myself, my wide domains, my unsullied, my glorious name to one so base and mean?"

"You have been so condescending."

"I have been wronged by false pretences. It was a marriage of fraud, and can be set aside. You called yourself Gordon."

"*Alias* Coryton!"

"Oh wretch, wretch, wretch!" shrieked, or rather screamed the unfortunate lady, as, exhausted with shame, surprise, and rage, she was sinking to the earth, and would have fallen, had not her husband supported her, and placed her on a sofa.

The agitation she had endured, left her so weak and ill that she was confined to her room for several days, during which time her reason frequently wandered. On her senses becoming somewhat more composed, she reflected on the position in which she was placed, and, after some deliberation, decided on bearing her hard lot with her unworthy deceiver, and not proclaiming her shame. She announced to her husband that she was able to undertake the journey and accompany him to Wales.

He informed her that her going there must depend on one condition.

"Condition!" exclaimed Mrs. Wyniates. "How dare you use such language to me; you, who confess yourself the same low creature that was saved from death and brought up by the bounty of our ancient house? Oh, what a viper has that house nourished in its bosom! And is it come to this? Do you tell me I can only go on conditions? Am I not a free agent?"

"To serve, honour, and *obey!*" said Wyniates,

sending the words through his set teeth in a slow and deliberate tone.

"Oh, Wyniates! how different was it once with us! How my lightest word had with you once the weight of a command!"

"True. I was a more obedient servant than you are a wife."

"Obedient!"

"Ay, obedient! It was my duty to obey, and I obeyed. It is now, Madam, your duty, your *sworn* duty, to *obey*, and you do it not!"

"Alas! alas! Too liberally did I reward your obedience; too deeply did I feel the obligations I was under."

"Why, yes! and they were less than you thought."

"Yet not small—you saved my life!"

"I first endangered it! Nay, I endangered it for the purpose of saving it. It was part of my scheme to bind you by supposed services—and it was this hand that fired the old Hall!"

"Now, thank God, I can be avenged—and

I will! I will! I will! Thy life is on the breath of my lip. The doom of the incendiary is thine!"

"All the same obliged, but, I beg pardon, Madam, as I used to say when I was a groom; beg pardon, but would venture to remind you that a wife cannot be a witness against her husband, and I well guarded against detection."

"Villain! atrocious villain!"

"Gentle words, fair lady! Think how I loved you! think how cautiously I laid my plot, how carefully I fulfilled it! Let me narrate a little of the pains I took to win you. Having risked what you are pleased to call the doom of the incendiary, (and I might add of the murderer, for a *life was lost* on the occasion,) I did actually dare the flames to save that wretched old daub of your ancestor. But, I should tell you, I first risked the doom of the thief, vulgarly the gallows, by entering your dressing-room, and pocketing your diamonds, of which I should have sold portions as I wanted money, had not the sum which you so considerately left at your bankers' for

me been sufficient to enable me to live quietly at Starn, and make out a family tree, and a family too, and *create* several relations who existed only in my letters to you. And I can assure you, in the construction of my pedigree I was much assisted by the learning in heraldry and that sort of mummery which I had had the opportunity of picking up when I had the honour of hearing your various discussions on those important points during my attendance on you. Nor is my family only the creation of yesterday, as I have (though I could not tell when or how I could bring the subject forward) for several years been determined, that I would one day inform you that your attentive groom was a gentleman after all."

Mrs. Wyniates groaned aloud.

"Now, Madam, having told you all this, I may as well proceed to name the condition on which I leave you at liberty."

"How mean you, sir?"

"You must know, madam, the servants who have attended us on our travels are bound to me

by the strong tie of self-interest and community of wrong. They have long been in my peculiar pay, and have joined me in intercepting the letters of your friends, and in propagating a report of ——"

Mr. Wyniates paused.

"Of what?" faintly inquired his lady.

"I will tell you: it is respecting a matter connected with that report that I have the condition, of which I spoke, to make. If you refuse it, you will spend your days in confinement: a house is already engaged for the custody of an insane lady, where you will bear a false name, whilst the world believes you dead."

"Oh! any thing but that! For pity! for mercy! for the sake of all I have done for you! spare me that, spare me."

For a moment Mr. Wyniates appeared to relent, but he quickly proceeded: "you must call my son yours!"

Mrs. Wyniates could not speak from astonishment.

He continued: "You will see by tl

which *I* received *for you*, at the Post-office at Geneva, that the Townleys offer you and me their congratulations on reading in the English papers the announcement, 'that the lady of John Gordon Wyniates, esq., had been safely delivered of a son and heir at Geneva.' Now, if you treat him as your son, although it is true my boy will appear a prodigy of a child for his age, as Margaret was confined before our marriage, and ——"

Here Mr. Wyniates paused again, without completing the sentence. His unhappy auditor had once more fainted away; and again, when the fit was over, her bewildered and astounded senses wandered abroad with all the wild antics of insanity.

For many days the miserable lady remained in that most distressing state. Her ravings were of her wrongs and of her ancestors. "Oh, save him!" she would cry, "save Sir Cecil! He fought at Agincourt, and survived; save him now! Put out the flames! They burn my father's hall—put them out, or hurl into them Margaret and her

child. Where is my groom—my faithful Coryton?"

It would have melted almost the hardest heart to hear her in her disordered mood. And could the cause of all look on and rejoice? Could he, whose debt of obligation was so large, regard the ruin he had made with triumph? At first he was for a brief space of time shocked at the work of his hand, but cold-hearted ambition had seized his soul; he had a game yet to play—a deep-laid scheme yet to execute, and the deranged state of his victim forwarded his views. It was necessary for their success that she should be out of the way, and, hardened as he was, he still hesitated to seal his iniquities with murder!

He had intended not to have put his scheme into execution at present, but to have deferred it till after he had paid another visit to Wales. But during his wife's illness he grew too impatient for this. He announced therefore his intention of removing his lady from their hotel to a place where she would be under proper care, and the people of the house were well-pleased

relieved from a guest in her situation. He desired them to keep all the circumstances secret, as it would only distress the family of his wife, in which the malady was prevalent; and he said she would on that account pass under an assumed name during her affliction.

After she was gone, he remained at the hotel, and continued to visit her from day to day. To the respectful inquiries of the host and servants, he constantly replied that he found her worse and worse, and she was sinking hourly; nor were they, after these communications, much surprised at his one day informing them that she was dead. In a few days the papers announced the decease of Mrs. Gordon Wyniates. And, finally, Mr. Wyniates summoned the landlord into his presence; and, having again received his assurance that 'no mention should be made of the lady's affliction, but that to any inquirer the answer should be that she had died at his hotel, by which precaution the nature of the house she had been removed to would not be disclosed,' he told him that he had buried her privately the

day before. After this he set off for Wales in deep mourning.

He was welcomed with the utmost kindness by Lord Barbican, who lost no time in calling to condole with him on his heavy loss, and to beg he would spend the principal portion of his time at Gotham Castle, promising that he and his niece would exert themselves to beguile his thoughts, which must naturally be for the present of a gloomy cast. His Lordship said how greatly he had missed his neighbour during his absence, as he had formed the highest opinion of his judgment, and he wished to consult him on some family affairs. Mr. Wyniates assured him he felt highly flattered, and greatly obliged, by the honour done him.

"By no means, Sir," replied his Lordship. "The obligation will be entirely on my side. But perhaps attending to the affairs of another may withdraw your mind a little from your own sad loss. The point whereon I have to consult you, is, a letter I have received from my former schoolfellow, the Earl of Aberdovey, who propose

an alliance between his eldest son, Lord Lloyd, and my niece. Now, the young people are quite unacquainted——"

"Oh monstrous!" exclaimed Wyniates.

"Not so, Sir," continued his Lordship. "The daughters of houses of our rank must sacrifice their feelings of romance and that sort of thing for the advancement of their families—"

"True, my Lord," replied Wyniates, perceiving that he had been on the wrong tack, and hastening to try another which his fertile mind readily suggested—"true, I can enter into that feeling; for I myself married my late wife, who was twelve or fourteen years my senior, and for whom of course I could feel no warmer sentiment than respect, purely out of a desire to unite the equally ancient houses of Gordon and Wyniates; and if such motives can influence commoners of whatever pride of descent, how much stronger must they be in those of the yet superior consideration of noble blood!"

Wyniates bowed low as he made the concluding remark, and then resumed: "But, my Lord, one

disadvantage in this alliance occurs to my mind, though perhaps you have thought of some means of obviating it. The title of Barbican would be lost! That of Aberdovey is of higher rank, and it would absorb (which would be hard) the one of greater antiquity. Indeed, there is none in the Principality, or, I might say, in Great Britain, of more unsullied and honoured fame than your Lordship's. Now, if a younger son of the Earl had been offered——yet no, perhaps the elder might die, and, if he were to succeed to the title, the same result would ensue. I would suggest to your Lordship whether it would not be preferable to select some distinguished commoner, one of the Wynns, or the Griffiths, for instance. Your ample domains need no increase to support this lofty title, while your great parliamentary influence (for, besides your own vote in the Upper House, I understand your Lordship returns for three boroughs,) will easily procure from the ministry the elevation of your son-in-law after your decease."

"Ten thousand thanks, my dear Mr. Wyniates.

for the suggestion! It shall be done! My friend Griffiths of Owen Hall has two sons of suitable age: so I will write to Aberdovey declining the honour; and I will go and pay Griffiths a visit and invite whichever of the lads pleases me best, (for I have never seen them,) to come and visit me at Gotham Castle. We will leave the young people a good deal alone. My niece is a pretty girl—"

"A beautiful girl, my Lord!"

"Ay, and if a young man and a beautiful girl, Wyniates, are thrown much together, and nobody by, the devil is in it if they do not fall in love. We shall manage that business, I warrant you."

"Shall you take your niece with you to Mr. Griffiths?"

"No, no. I must not hawk my wares, you know. She is worth coming for. But I 'll take *you*, if you like, as my friend."

"You forget my recent loss, my Lord. I am no less obliged to you, but respect for the memory of my lately deceased wife must confine me at home for the present."

"True, you are right! Well, you must call sometimes at the Castle, notwithstanding my absence. You can perhaps manage to prepare my niece a little, as, for instance, by praising the young man."

"But I do not know him, my Lord."

"No, but you can say you have heard of him, as you have now from me. A little stratagem is all fair in love-affairs and that sort of thing, mind that."

"You think cheating fair?"

"Yes, to be sure—about women. I limit it to that."

"Very well; but which of the young Owens—Griffiths, I mean—am I to praise?"

"Ay, I must choose now, I suppose, between them."

"Unless I praise both equally."

"Good!"

"Or praise young Griffiths generally, without saying there are two; and then the one w
will be the man."

"Capital! Oh, what a fellow you are, Wyniates—a sly dog! Well, I shall set off to-morrow."

"Do, my Lord, and if any thing should happen to detain you, favour me with a line to say what observations you have made, and which of the sons you prefer. It would be desirable, I should think, for you to allow yourself time enough for a careful and deliberate selection, because if you were at first to choose the wrong one—and first impressions, my Lord, are often erroneous, and people are sometimes mistaken in the character of others—it might be a difficult matter to eradicate the prepossessions of the young lady."

"I quite agree with you. I will take time. Should you think a week would be long enough?"

"A fortnight would be better, my Lord. Your friends will rejoice in your company, and you will then be sure not to be deceived. People disclose their real character in the long run, whereas for a few days they can play a part,

and it would be possible for an individual for a time to impose even upon a person of your Lordship's discrimination."

"Well, I will stay a fortnight. But to make all sure, and to have the benefit of your advice, I will write you word what I observe, and you shall send me your opinion."

In conformity with this resolution, his Lordship on the following day set off for Owen Hall.

Left alone master of the field, with no one to watch his motions, Mr. Wyniates made the most of the chances thrown before him. He either rode up to the Castle each morning, or contrived to meet Miss Barbican in her rides. Her uncle having first seen him as a married man and the husband of a wife of a certain age, had entirely overlooked the fact of his being in reality quite a young man, and now able to contract a new alliance. So strong are first impressions on weak minds! Indeed the ability to escape their trammels is one of the best tests of an intellect of superior order. But without any superiority of intellect, the niece had somehow or other become

conscious of the alteration in the position of her companion, although she still felt towards him somewhat differently, and perhaps more at her ease than she would have done, had she first met him in his present state. The tendency of this feeling was rather against his views than favourable to them, and was less likely to lead her into falling into love with him than to produce in her mind a sort of sense of easy intimacy. He saw this, and that it would be necessary for him to endeavour to change the impression. Their rides afforded opportunities which he failed not to improve, and they certainly were occasions on which for a reason she was little aware of, namely, his having been a groom, he appeared to great advantage. He had all the ease of a perfect horseman, and the skill with which he made the fiery animals that composed his stud subservient to his command won her admiration. A person who has impressed himself on the mind of a young lady as greatly excelling in any point, be that what it may, has gained a landing on which to erect his battery. Wyniates was conscious that

he had at length found a certain degree of favour in the youthful eyes of Miss Barbican. She was a young lady of high spirits, little taste, and no sentiment. A man of good figure, free manner, and gay temper, Wyniates thought, possessed every qualification she cared about. If, as in his own case, he had also a good fortune, so much the better, although she could have done without it. In addition to his other qualifications he was anxious to make her observe the pleasure he took in her society, well knowing that if a lover reflects upon a lady her own merits, he is sure to rise higher thereby in her opinion than by a considerable display of his own. He endeavoured also by the language of the eye to express his admiration, and to show that he wished to throw a tenderer hue over their intercourse.

As Miss Barbican was alone without any female companion in the Castle, Mr. Wyniates was precluded from visiting and passing his evenings there in the same manner as he had been used to do when her uncle was at home. But the gods

favoured him one day so far as to send an opportune shower, just at the time when, having escorted the fair equestrian to her own door, he was turning to ride away. She could not but invite him to take shelter.

The shower deepened into a storm, and was of considerable duration. Mr. Wyniates said he was aware the dinner-hour approached, and he was becoming an intruder. Miss Barbican declared he must not go out when it was raining so. As if to support her words, the huge drops rattled against the windows. Wyniates said he would remain till it cleared up, and then not prolong his stay a moment.

The two sat down to dinner. The storm still continued when the repast was over. The footman placed the dessert and the wine on the table, and left the room. They were alone.

There was a pause.

"You give me no wine," said Miss Barbican, putting her glass forward, and breaking the silence.

"I beg ten thousand pardons," said Wyniates, sighing, and rousing himself from the reverie in which he had appeared absorbed.

As he filled her glass and then his own, he looked towards his companion. Their eyes met. He sighed, and Miss Barbican looked surprised, and blushed slightly.

"What a beautiful horse you rode this morning!" observed the young lady, wishing again to break the ice of their silence. "I suppose he is a new one, as I never saw him before?"

"You are quite right," replied Wyniates. "I purchased him in town a week or two ago, and my groom only arrived with him yesterday. He came by such easy stages, and seemed so well and so fresh, that I thought he wanted no rest."

"He is a splendid creature!"

"He is, and he will have a new value in my eyes, since he has found favour in yours. Will you allow him to come up with a side-saddle in the morning, if it is fine? he was warranted to carry a lady."

"I should be afraid."

"Afraid! such a rider as you!"

"I should, indeed; though I have been told I ride tolerably well—"

"Exquisitely well, faultlessly—as you do every thing!"

"Nonsense!" said Miss Barbican. "However, I think I will venture. Suppose he should break my neck, what will my uncle say to you?"

"If the animal hurt you but by accident, he should be shot the next moment. But, talking of your uncle, I have had a letter from him this morning."

"And 'pray, how is he? He has not written to me since he went to Mr. Griffiths'."

"He writes in good spirits," said Wyniates, drawing the letter from his pocket, "and chiefly about *you*."

"What can he have to say about *me?* and to *you* too! Nay, that is strange. Only to think of his writing *about me to you!* You make me curious."

"I cannot show you his letter; it would be a breach of confidence."

"Won't you show it?" said Miss Barbican.

"I *must* not, or I would," replied Wyniates.

"Then I shall steal it;" and Miss Barbican, suiting the action to the word, snatched the letter and ran off laughing to the end of the room. Wyniates followed her.

Miss Barbican placed herself in the corner, holding the letter behind her in one hand whilst with the other she motioned to him not to advance nearer.

"Indeed, I must have my letter," said Wyniates.

"Not till I have read it, I vow," cried the young lady.

"Then I must use a little gentle violence," said Wyniates, encouraged to close upon his laughing antagonist, and putting out his arm as if to clasp her waist.

"Oh, take it, take it," exclaimed Miss Barbican, throwing down the letter, and assuming

a serious countenance. "We ought not to behave in this way,—and my uncle out, too!"

As Wyniates stooped to pick up the ceded bone of contention, Miss Barbican glided past him and rushed to the door.

"Stop one moment," cried Wyniates, seeing that he had gone too far: but Miss Barbican put her hand on the handle of the door.

"Nay, *do* stop, Miss Barbican; I have a word of grave importance to say to you—I have, on the honour of a gentleman.—Do not shake your head—I am serious, I assure you. You will not believe me? and yet it is true: it affects your happiness for life."

The earnestness of his tone convinced more than the words themselves: the young lady let go the handle of the door, but still stood near it, ready to escape.

"First, let me apologise, if you thought me rude. I meant no—"

"Say no more about it," interrupted Miss Barbican; "I set you the example by snatching the

letter: it was my fault. I am very young, but I know we have not behaved as we ought."

"Believe me, I will not offend again. Show that you trust me and forgive me by returning to your chair. I will disclose to you the contents of the letter."

"Not if it is a breach of confidence. Although you have raised my curiosity, I was but in jest when I said I would read it."

"I think you ought to hear it. I consider that a breach of confidence — (which in some degree it must be confessed I am guilty of)—is a less crime than conniving at your being sold for ambition and made miserable for life."

The curiosity of Miss Barbican was now effectually excited. She returned to her chair, and Mr. Wyniates, seating himself too, thus continued: "Your uncle, Miss Barbican, forgetting that I am a young man, because I was once married to an elderly wife, has done me the honour of asking my advice respecting an union between Mr. Griffiths and yourself."

"Mr. Griffiths! I do not know him. I have never seen him, and I really thought he had been as old as my uncle himself."

"It is one of his sons."

"But I have never seen any of his sons."

"Nor had your uncle. Having first determined you should marry one, he then set out to decide *which*: his visit was for that express purpose."

"But why marry me to a stranger? or, why at all, at present? I am but seventeen, and—oh, dear! I feel so embarrassed! Is it right to talk to a gentleman on such subjects?—What shall I do?"

"I admire your delicacy, my dear Miss Barbican," said Wyniates, "and be assured in whatever conversation we may have on these matters, I will not fail to respect it. Well, I have a letter describing the preferable Mr. Griffiths. You will find he has but one club-foot——"

"Club-foot! Marry me to a monster!" cried the horrified girl, starting back in her chair.

"One club-foot,—a trifling squint,—and delicate in health."

"I will not have him—I will not have him! I will not be sacrificed."

"I applaud your spirit. Marriage, Miss Barbican, is an affair for life—how wretched must it be where there is neither love nor respect! I will read you an extract from the letter, and, when you hear it, you will wonder at his Lordship's infatuation in dreaming of throwing away on deformity and disease a young lady of those accomplishments and that beauty which you cannot but be conscious of."

"The letter, sir; the letter!"

"His Lordship proceeds thus:—'David Griffiths shows me the greatest possible respect. He is a youth of admirable temper and disposition. He has all the brains of the family—for, if I happen to tell a good story, or say a smart thing, all the rest stare open-mouthed as if they wondered what I meant; but David is sure to catch the idea, and show by the heartiness of his laugh

that he sips the cream of the joke. I have no doubt the cast in his eye, which is really hardly perceptible, except when his full face is turned towards you, and a trifling peculiarity in the shape of one foot, which is a little shorter and thicker than the other—'"

"Oh, the wretch!" ejaculated Miss Barbican.

Wyniates smiled and read on:—"'but which cannot really be called a club-foot, would look a little strange in Adeline's eyes at first, but she would get used to these little peculiarities; and when she found how well he played at cribbage and backgammon, how accomplished he was, and what droll songs he sung, I should hope (especially if we kept others out of her sight) she might be led to approve of him as a person who would help her to pass her life agreeably.' What think you of the cribbage, Miss Barbican, and the comic songs?"

"I am too angry to laugh, Mr. Wyniates."

"Nay, Miss Barbican, I should not laugh if I thought for a moment you would bestow that

fair hand on a creature like this. Imagine the sickly cripple singing with his side-face fixed upon you!"

"Oh, the horrid idea!"

"Now, Miss Barbican, knowing you had such a fate before you, do you not think me justified in a slight breach of faith, that you might be warned and prepared how to act?"

"I am eternally obliged to you; but do tell me what to do, and how to escape. Have the man I will not—but I would not willingly offend my uncle. Since my father's death, he has supplied his place; and, though I have a small independence of my own, I owe him too much to contradict and displease him without pain!"

"Allow me to take a night to consider before I advise. You know the confidence, which his Lordship reposes in me, places me in a delicate situation. But I will turn over in my mind what is best to be done. And if you will permit me the honour of riding out with you in the morning, we can then talk the matter over more deliberately."

With many thanks on the young lady's part, and much profession on that of Wyniates of his wish to serve her, the conversation terminated; and he ordered his horse out, and set off for the Villa in the rain which still continued to fall, though in smaller drops.

CHAPTER V.

Mr. Wyniates had read to Miss Barbican not half her uncle's letter. He had entirely left out all that related to Caractacus Goodall, the elder of the two Griffiths, of whom his Lordship spoke as a remarkably tall, fine, and handsome young man, being upwards of six feet high, with dark locks carefully curled, and good features, although their expression was silly and vacant: he was, he added, evidently of inferior abilities to his younger brother; his manners were affected, yet vulgar; he was very ignorant, understanding nothing but dogs and horses; and, to crown all, he was wanting in proper civility towards himself. He said that the younger was much more to his own fancy; but he owned he thought he would not be equally so to his niece's, for the reasons

which Wyniates had read aloud. He concluded with asking Wyniates' advice, and with the promise that if he recommended him to bring the elder, he would do so; but he should prefer the younger, if his friend thought, as he did, that Adeline could be induced to accept him.

To this letter Wyniates had already despatched a reply, at the time when he produced it before Miss Barbican. He had strongly urged his Lordship to select the younger brother, interspersing a reasonable number of common-places about the fallaciousness of outward appearances, the truth of the old proverb—that '*Handsome is that handsome does*,' and the superiority of mental to bodily excellence,—an opinion, he added, which, though his niece might not at her tender age sympathize with it so fully as they could wish, she would live to acknowledge the truth of. He suggested, that as the elder son did not pay that marked deference which his Lordship's seniority in years and eminence in rank demanded, he would be always certain hereafter, that, if he became more attentive when he was related

to him, it would be from interested motives. Finally, he said, his Lordship could but try the younger first; and then, if Miss Barbican should show any prejudice against his personal appearance, there would be still another string to his Lordship's bow, and he could then bring forward the elder.

Wyniates had therefore been quite in earnest when he strove to prevent Miss Barbican from reading her uncle's letter; and he had been a good deal disappointed at the manner in which she had put a stop to his boisterous mode of flirtation, as well as with their conversations having terminated without his seeing any opportunity, which he judged sufficiently favourable, for offering her his hand.

He was so occupied with these thoughts, and with pressing Miss Barbican into his toils by bringing Mr. Griffiths into the field, that, unconscious of the rain and the road, he had completed his short ride, and was at his own gate before he was aware: he had proceeded mechanically into his study, when his footman aroused

him from his abstraction by placing the letter-bag before him.

He opened it, and found its contents unusually numerous. Two or three letters that first came to his hand turned out to be merely notes of condolence, or on matters of no great moment, —but all were not equally unimportant.

One he knew came from the person who had the custody of his wife: he hoped it might tell him that he was released from that impediment to his ambition. It was, however, to a very different effect:—it stated that Mrs. Stacey (for that was the name they had given Mrs. Wyniates) was so far recovered that she had long intervals of reason, during which she made every effort to escape, and had offered the writer the half of her possessions, and to forgive the past, if he would befriend her; but that, when she had found her promises unavailing against his fidelity, she usually relapsed into phrenzy, and tore every thing she could lay hands on, vowing vengeance against all parties, but most against her husband.

This letter greatly disturbed Wyniates; for he feared lest he might be so much outbribed that his agent might be induced to change sides: he could not safely depend on a person whose villany had been his recommendation to himself. The man had travelled with him as valet, and, finding him a ready instrument, he had employed him in corrupting the fidelity of the maid of his wife. Through these two he had effectually intercepted all letters which he did not choose her to receive; and by those means he had kept her in ignorance of the story of her having had a son abroad.

When he found it necessary to the success of his schemes that his wife should be kept out of sight, and be reported to have died, he had employed the same parties; and, in order more effectually to secure the woman to him, he had, by paying down a considerable sum as her fortune, persuaded the man to marry her; on which occasion they had seemed to leave his service, but had in reality taken and prepared

a house, to which their unfortunate mistress was shortly afterwards removed; and she was stated to their humble neighbours and their few trades'-people to be the widow of a merchant who had fallen from great wealth to poverty.

"I must go and look after these people," soliloquized Wyniates; "and I will not only raise their pay, but I must contrive to implicate them with me, so that discovery would be as ruinous to them as to myself. Nothing like a community of interest! And yet I ought to press on matters with the pretty child at the Castle too. Well, I will write to them, and tell them to be very vigilant, and say I am so well pleased with their care that I mean to double their salary, and I am looking out for a nice house in Wales for them to live in and have for their own. But softly—I must word it so that my letter, if it fell into wrong hands, would appear all right—as thus—'for your faithful attention and safe keeping of my relative, poor Mrs. Stacey;' ay, that will do, and then — But, ah, what have we here?

Mr. Townley's crest and his handwriting! Condolence, I suppose,—ha, ha, ha, to the *widower*,—ha, ha, ha!"

As Wyniates read the letter the laugh quickly subsided, and his countenance assumed a serious and embarrassed air. Mr. Townley stated "that, though he took the opportunity of expressing his condolence for his loss of that excellent lady, whom he had so many reasons for regarding, the object of his letter was business. He had to inform Mr. Gordon Wyniates that Mr. Walter Wyniates intended making minute inquiries as to the birth of a son, as no person had seen the child in England, as far as he could learn; and also, he wanted explanation as to the place where his relative had died, and the reason why none of the family had been apprised in the usual way of that event, and invited to attend her funeral." Mr. Townley stated, "that having been made aware of these steps, he had come forward as a well-wisher of the family, and out of respect to the memory of his late valued friend, and had obtained Mr. Walter Wyniates' sanction to his applying to Mr. Gordon

Wyniates in the first instance, and before any more formal proceedings were commenced, or any exposure was made, for information on these points."

"And so the heir does stir at last!" cried Wyniates; "well, I think I can satisfy him. But I wish I had not to deal with that Townley; I felt I was not acquitted in his mind about poor Margaret Brownsword. Nevertheless, the groom is more than a match for him, I fancy! Ay, John Wyniates, formerly Gordon, formerly Coryton, was born a diplomatist, as they call it! However, I have plenty on my hands for one time. Lie there to-night, Squire Townley, and I will take a pillow-thought before I reply to you."

He opened his desk, and, having tossed in the two letters, he looked at the Bramah key, as he restored it to his pocket, where it lay, guarded by a chain.

It was late before the eyes of Wyniates closed that night. Busy and anxious thoughts occupied his brain, and, as he reflected on his position, it

seemed more fraught with danger than it had before appeared. He well knew the precautions he had taken, but he knew also the great stake which there was to quicken the scrutiny of the heir-at-law, and he was aware of the unfavourable nature of Mr. Townley's prepossessions. But the greatest hazard, he felt, was in the other quarter. If his prisoner should escape, exposure and disgrace were his doom. If she were but safely transferred to a better world, how much safer, he thought, he should rest in this! The idea occurred to him that he would write to Balderson, her keeper, and make him some such offer as he had before thought of—namely, that instead of his present salary, he would settle an annuity on him and his wife, with the additional covenant that whenever his present office should terminate, he was, in consideration of their having lived with their charge till her death, to convey to them a house and small estate in Wales, exclusive and beyond the annuity. But upon further consideration, he resolved not to trust this hint to paper, but to wait till he could see the man, and

feel his way gradually before he committed himself too far.

Day had not dawned long before the plotter was at work. He wrote to Balderson, commending his zeal, promising increased reward, and stating that he should seize the first opportunity of hastening to town, when he would complete arrangements for making him and his wife entirely independent for life. He ventured to add in a postscript, that "whenever their present irksome task was over, there would be a house of their own to receive them, with other advantages, which he would particularize hereafter, and which would prove that he did not mean to cast them off when their charge should be no more."

He next applied himself to Mr. Townley's letter, but he tore up several half-finished sheets before he produced a reply which he considered sufficiently satisfactory to despatch. As he again read it over for final approval, and indulged in a running commentary on the different passages, he smiled at his own ingenuity.

"Come, this will do, I think," he exclaimed.

"Let me see. 'Barbican Villa.—Sir, I am greatly obliged by the favour of your letter,'—(confound his meddling impudence, I say!)— 'and I beg to thank you for your kind sympathy in my irreparable loss'—(not so irreparable, is it, my little Adeline?)—'of that excellent woman, to whom, as you say most truly'—(and most impertinently) —'I owe so much. I also feel very grateful for your endeavouring to prevent family quarrels and exposures'—(ay, let us have no exposures!)— 'and I hope you will deem my answer to the questions of Mr. Walter Wyniates perfectly satisfactory. My beloved Augusta was confined at Geneva. Her child was christened by a Swiss Protestant clergyman of the name of Snacks, and, though my wife was not well enough to be present at the ceremony, two of her servants were there, and I will send you their names and addresses, if you shall think it necessary. But if you were to write or send a messenger to M. Snacks, he has a memorandum which he made in my presence, and which bears my signature affixed at the time, namely, 22nd October,

in the last year. I give you, Sir, my solemn assurance, that my child was christened by him on that very day'—(at least Margaret says 'tis mine, and I believe it is).—'With respect to the death of my wife, it took place on the day you are aware of through the public papers, at Valentine's Hotel, and I refer you to the landlord for confirmation of the fact. You will remember, Sir, that Mr. Walter Wyniates refused to remain at your house, because I was invited to partake of your kind hospitality. After being so slighted at a time when I was about to become related, you will not wonder that I omitted the civility of inviting him to the funeral of a lady, for whom, I will add, he never had evinced any particular regard. No other member of the family am I acquainted with, and, indeed, there are none, as you well know, but very remote branches. It would have been as well if, notwithstanding the above reasons, I had not left it to the papers to communicate Mrs. Wyniates' decease; but at those distressing times one is not always so thoughtful as one should be, and ceremony is apt

to be overlooked when the heart is absorbed with affliction.'—(Touching, that!)—'That Mr. Walter Wyniates should wish to have these things made clear, is but natural; I hope you will think I have made them so.

"'I should have no objection, provided that gentleman does not evince a hostile feeling, nor irritate me by undue pertinacity in inquiries, which to a certain extent are reasonable, to make him an allowance out of the family property. Of course, my marriage and the birth of my son must needs have been causes of disappointment to him, though the heiress in possession had a right to please herself. I make the offer in a liberal spirit, and hope he will take it in good part. I will go to the extent of £500 a year, to cease on his giving me trouble in the inheritance, or pursuing his researches further than the parties above mentioned—namely, the clergyman, the two servants, and the landlord; which, in addition to my own assurance, ought to be sufficient.'—(I should certainly be puzzled to produce doctor or midwife from Geneva, or physician or undertaker

in London; but I must look after such people if this does not keep them quiet, which I think it will. It would be hard if money would not get me a few oaths.)—'I beg to send my respects to Mrs. Townley and Miss Forbes, and have the honour to be your obedient servant, J. GORDON WYNIATES.' A capital letter, I must say, though I say it that should not say it, as people say. And I must say, the pains I took when I used to steal from my fellow-servants in the stable, and employ myself in reading the books my old schoolmaster had recommended, were not thrown away. There is many a gentleman born who supports his station with a worse grace than the son of the poor Scotchwoman. What folly is this notion of birth, this fancy of ancestry! The oldest and the noblest houses, as they call themselves, have sad flaws in them, were they but known. And yet my pedigree was of use! Well, instead of ruminating on such rubbish, I must equip myself for wooing. Young looks and a light heart will do more for me with the little Adeline—(only to think of a groom talking so

of a Lord's niece !)—than old fathers and quarterings and crests. I long to see my rival with the odd foot. At all events, the girl will be on my side so far, though she seems less taken with me than I used to think her when my wife was with us. She flirted then with me—perhaps because she knew it could not go farther. It may be, she is afraid of being so forward now, lest I should shun the offered hook. However, if she likes me, all the better; but, like me or like me not, she must be Mrs. Wyniates,—that Mr. Wyniates, heretofore Gordon, heretofore Coryton the groom, may be at last, as he *shall* be, Lord Barbican, of Gotham Castle."

As Wyniates advanced in his soliloquy, he rose from his chair, warmed by his theme, and strode proudly across the room. But he stopped as he uttered the last few words, stood quite still and erect, and clapped his hands loudly together; then, raising his right hand, he motioned it twice round his brow, as if encircling the aërial coronet, and then, pointing it to the ceiling, he kept it there elevated above his head.

"'Tis a pity there is no artist at hand," he exclaimed, dropping it at length, and smiling at himself, "to catch the energy of my attitude. I should make as good a portrait as Sir Cecil, after all. But now, instead of complimenting myself, I must get ready to meet the eyes of Miss Adeline. I really think she is as nice a girl as I ever met with, always excepting poor Margaret. But then she is so young, she really seems hardly to comprehend my glances. However, I must proceed gently, and not frighten her. I was very near going too far the last time."

Wyniates planted himself before his glass, and arranged his dress with a studious attention to effect; and then, having locked his letter-bag, into which he had put the compositions of the morning carefully sealed, he mounted his horse, and followed by his groom, who led the one which Miss Barbican had admired, equipped with a side-saddle, he rode towards the Castle. He found Miss Barbican in her habit, expecting him. She handed him a letter, saying, "There, Mr. Wyniates, look at the seal, and fancy how I have

been longing to open it, after what you told me last night."

"I see it is from his Lordship, and I wonder at his sending it this way."

"I have had a few lines too, just to say he is coming home, and bringing a young friend, and requesting me to send this letter down to the Villa, as you would get it sooner than by post."

"Excuse my reading it," said Wyniates, breaking the seal. "Oh, it is very short, aud merely says his Lordship is coming home with Mr. Griffiths, to whom he wishes to introduce me, and he hopes I will dine at the Castle to-day. That is all."

"Well, then, you will see my swain, as well as myself. I will go and get my whip, and put on my hat, and we will be off without keeping the horses waiting."

When the young lady had left the room, Mr. Wyniates again cast his eye over the letter, of which he had read her *not quite all*. It was short, however, and in the following words :—

"DEAR WYNIATES,

"I got yours this evening, and much approve your advice about trying Adeline with David Griffiths first. I have given out that business requires my immediate return, and have ordered my carriage in the morning. The moment I read your letter, I invited David, and he is coming with me; we shall be at home to dinner, where you must meet us by all means. Be at the Castle before us, in order that you may observe the first meeting of Adeline and the young man, and tell me your opinion; we shall not be there before half-past six. I send off a servant to-night by coach. He will get within six miles of Gotham late to-night, and I have ordered him to be up early in the morning, and walk to the Castle; and as soon as he gets there, to send off some one with this to you.

"Yours,

"BARBICAN."

"Owen Hall."

Wyniates had scarce time to finish the perusal,

and thrust the letter into his pocket, ere he heard the light step of Miss Barbican returning.

They mounted their horses, and the one Miss Barbican rode justified his warranty, for the sagacious creature seemed to know he was carrying a lady, and to temper his playfulness, so that he appeared far more gentle than when his master bestrode his back.

Wyniates had selected a wild and romantic path. They had two or three streams to ride through, and more than one mountainous defile to thread; but no adventure occurred,—there was no opportunity for a display of gallantry, there was no broken bridge, no Ferraby Brook scene. But during the whole of their ride, his eye was hardly ever once off the slight figure of his young companion, whilst her attention seemed entirely bestowed on her new charger.

"Oh, you fine fellow!" she cried, patting his huge shoulder.

The proud animal curved his neck, and bounded gracefully forward.

"He is a fine fellow, and I envy him," cried Wyniates.

Miss Barbican smiled, and seemed not to take the words as meaning more than a common-place compliment.

Wyniates was annoyed, but returned to the charge. "My occupation will soon be gone; you will have another companion in your rides!"

"Yes, I shall miss you—."

"Oh, thank you! I shall often think of those words."

"Because my uncle rides so slowly, he quite tires my patience, and we only go a mile or two, instead of coming to these beautiful hills."

Wyniates bit his lip.

"Is it not tiresome to go creeping along?" said Miss Barbican.

"Very."

The grave tone in which this short answer was returned induced the young lady to turn her eye towards the speaker, who however, mastering his temper, went on:—

"It is very tiresome, certainly. I do love the excitement of a good gallop over these turfy hills to meet the wind."

"So do I! *Allons.*"

At these words Miss Barbican put her charger to his speed, and close at her side galloped her companion.

When they pulled up their horses, Wyniates renewed the conversation:—

"But you will not depend on his Lordship: you will have little Griffiths."

"Oh, do not remind me of him. I shall see him only too soon. Besides, perhaps, he may not be fond of horses and riding."

"And then, perhaps, I may be allowed to retain my delightful office of being your escort. I will come at a word, and take thankfully all of your company which he may leave me."

"Nay, you can join our party. I shall always be glad to have you with us, for surely I prefer old acquaintance to new ones."

"Ten thousand thanks!"

"And, moreover, the presence of a third party will prevent his odious advances."

"You forget that your uncle means you two to be left much alone. However, I shall be consoled if I may be allowed to think that you wish for my presence."

"I shall, indeed," said Miss Barbican. Wyniates' heart beat, but the continuation of the sentence chilled its emotion, "for I would not be left alone with the creature for the world."

"Perhaps you may like him better than you suppose. He is clever, his Lordship says, and his talent for comic singing—"

"Odious! odious! Do, pray, Mr. Wyniates, spare me the idea. Of all things on earth, I do hate to see a man play the ridiculous. Even first-rate skill on the flute or violin cannot to me atone for the absurd gesture of the performer."

"I agree with you. For instance, it would be positive pain to me to see *you* perform on any but a graceful instrument, as your guitar, or your piano. I think you wise in not playing the harp,

which requires a tall figure, and would not suit one whose perfect proportions are of the small dimensions of the sylph."

"You are a flatterer."

"No, I exceed not the truth."

Wyniates was pursuing the theme which he now thought was leading favourably towards the point he wished, but Miss Barbican had again broken into a canter,—a pace very agreeable, but neither sentimental, nor advantageous for breathing soft nonsense into a lady's ear.

Ere she pulled up, they were too near the Castle for him to think it advisable to revive the subject. Having seen her safe home, he took his leave for the present, saying he should return in his carriage at a quarter past six.

And he was punctual to the hour. On entering the drawing-room, he found only Lord Barbican's chaplain there. They had scarcely exchanged greetings when Miss Barbican entered.

"Now, Miss Barbican, if you please," said Mr. Phlegethon, as the young lady took her seat at a window at some distance from where

the gentlemen were standing, "I will just complete my argument. I am sure Mr. Wyniates will pardon me."

"Certainly," said Wyniates.

"Then I shall not," said Miss Barbican. "Do you know, Mr. Wyniates, Mr. Phlegethon has been here in this room ever since I came in from my ride, and has been trying to persuade me not to admit Dissenters' children to our girls' school; and, actually, he would hardly allow me to go away and change my dress for dinner."

"I have indeed, sir, been offering a few arguments to Miss Barbican's consideration. I spoke to his Lordship lately on the subject, and he told me his niece had now the controul of the school, and that he never interfered."

"I think his Lordship quite right, sir. Too many heads do not bring unanimity to councils. It must be very gratifying to you, sir, as a divine, to see a lady of Miss Barbican's early years and high rank, devoting a portion of her time to the improvement of the families of her poorer neighbours."

"It is, Sir, better for that lady's eternal welfare than if she devoted the whole to balls and frivolous amusements and vain accomplishments, which are lures for our breasts from the great tempter. But, Sir, how saith our Litany: 'From heresy and schism, good Lord, deliver us!' Now, Sir, as the poor require to be driven like stray sheep into the fold, and would be lost but for our vigilance, who are brought up for their guidance, I must say it is quite necessary for us to prevent them from the errors of the Dissenters, —be they Methodists, or Baptists, or Anabaptists, or particular Baptists, or whichever they may belong to of the three or four hundred different denominations into which they split, when they once sever from the Established Church. Truth, Sir, is one—dissent is manifold; ergò, dissent is not truth. Again, truth is one; there is but one Established Church; ergò, that one is the true. This I have shown by the plain rule of logic, which you will recognise; that is to say, if you are a logician. Which University had the honour of having you for a member?"

"None."

"Indeed! You amaze me. There was a Wyniates at Christ Church—"

"Perhaps my cousin Walter?"

"Perhaps so. However, since you are neither a logician nor a mathematician, I must pursue the Socratic mode."

"Which I understand no more than logic or mathematics. Still, Sir, I think I have learnt enough of nature's logic in the large University of the World to see a flaw in your argument. If any other Church had happened to be the established one, (as is the case in other countries,) it would, according to you, be the true one."

"Why, you see, my dear Sir, it is in vain to argue syllogistically with a gentleman who does not know even the first principals of the art of ratiocination, and is unacquainted with the lines—

'Barbara, Celarent, Darii, Ferioque, prioris;
Cæsare, Camestres——'"

"Oh, mercy!" exclaimed Miss Barbican.

"Pardon me, Miss Barbican: I will not weary you. Those few lines contain the whole of human reason; without them we should be like the beasts of the field that perish.—Nay, Mr. Wyniates, if you cannot argue *seriously*—"

"You say I cannot *argue* at all!"

"Still you might listen to argument."

"But how am I to know it to be such?"

"By trusting to those who have studied logic. Now, I, who have done so, will draw my premises, and then assent to them for you. I will conduct the argument on your behalf."

"Thank you," said Wyniates. "I am much obliged. No doubt, if you do me that favour, we shall arrive at the same conclusion."

"I think so. Thus then, Sir, I assent, for you, to the conclusions which I proposed before. I have got therefore so far in my argument as to show, first, that there is an Established Church; secondly, that it is the true faith; thirdly, that there are other faiths; fourthly, that being other, they are not the same; fifthly, that not being t

same, they differ; sixthly, that so differing from the truth, they are untrue; seventhly, that they ought to be suppressed; and then I come naturally, and eighthly, and finally, to the plain *sequitur*, that Miss Barbican ought not to encourage Dissenters, otherwise Heretics, otherwise Schismatics, by allowing them advantages equally with those of the Establishment."

"But, Sir, would you not have Dissenters instructed at all?"

"I would, of course."

"Then you would supply teachers of their own persuasion?"

"Indeed I would not! That would be encouraging them indeed!"

"But, Sir, if they are neither to be taught at your schools, nor to have schools of their own, and yet you say they are to be instructed, I see before them a difficulty."

"No difficulty at all, my good Sir! Let them change their religion!"

Mr. Phlegethon looked most triumphant at this solution of the supposed *difficulty*, and, ere his

antagonist could commence any rejoinder, Miss Barbican exclaimed, "Here comes my uncle!" and the rattle of wheels and the swift tramp of horses was heard, which ceased in a moment, as the carriage stopped at the door.

CHAPTER VI.

"How are you, my good friend?" exclaimed his Lordship, taking Wyniates warmly by the hand; "How are ye, Phleg?" nodding to the clergyman; "And how are you, my little girl?" patting his niece on the shoulder;—"I've brought you a beau,—Mr. David Griffiths—Miss Barbican. Mr. David Griffiths, Mr. Wyniates. Well, Wyniates; I'm delighted to see you again: missed you confoundedly, though I spent a delightful time at Owen Hall, thanks to my old friend Griffiths, and my young friend his son here. Phleg, make a little room by the fire for Mr. Griffiths; we've found it cold. And I say, Phleg, do go and decant the port for me: my butler, you know, is such a bad hand, and you do it so well."

Mr. Phlegethon left the room to execute the

appointed office, which his Lordship considered part of his duty as chaplain. As soon as he was gone, he inquired of his niece, why he did not see Mr. Graves, whom he had requested her to invite. "He sent an excuse," said Miss Barbican; "he is going to attend Mrs. Malthouse, who is expecting to be confined."

"Confined! Why, the woman's always being confined. She has had eleven children in eight years! Wyniates, a word with you."

His Lordship led his guest to a distant part of the room, and then proceeded: "I sent for the surgeon to make up the rubber with you and me and my chaplain, and then I thought the young folks would be left together. Was not that a good smart idea?"

"You are full of foresight, my Lord; but the wisest plans may be defeated by accident. This prolific lady has spoilt all."

"Ay, and the worst is, unless we get him to whist, Phleg is apt to forget he is not in the pulpit, where he has it all his own way, and actually presumes to bore me even h

latter end, and all that sort of thing, which one is obliged to hear in church; (though I would not submit to that but for the example my rank compels me to set;) but the deuce is in it if I can't be lord of my own castle."

"Very true, my Lord. There is a time for all things—which reminds me that you need not so much care about our not leaving the pair alone this one evening. We shall have an opportunity of seeing how they take to each other."

"By the bye, as to their meeting, did you observe whether Adeline seemed struck with the youth's appearance?"

"I should say not. His foot is so slightly deformed, that perhaps she did not perceive it, as it has not been pointed out. The cast in the eye is more obvious."

"Yes, true. But, nevertheless, you think she is not disgusted at first sight? Then I 've hopes! However, I must just show him his room before dinner."

With these words, his Lordship led Mr. Griffiths out of the drawing-room.

Miss Barbican and Wyniates were left alone. However, she had scarce time to tell him that she had been less shocked with the stranger's person than she had expected, but that, knowing with what design he had been brought to the Castle, she had felt the utmost repugnance towards him, ere Mr. Phlegethon returned.

He restored the cuffs of his coat to their place, and brushed the sawdust from his wrist.

"Quite a nosegay, your uncle's wine, Miss Barbican! and, Mr. Wyniates, as I was saying—they had only to change their religion. But, are we to expect them to do this, if we do not make it *worth while*, and if they can have the same advantages without? If it is all the same, why should they change? Now, man is influenced by motives, and the first cause employs secondary causes. The smaller they are, the greater power he evinces by using them successfully. What, therefore, can be more glorious than to make converts by locking the school-room door, to lessen sectarianism by A B C? I grow eloquent, for I feel warmed by the subject. I have it

heart; my soul thirsteth, my spirit hungereth, my—"

"Dinner is on the table," said a servant, throwing open the door.

"Dinner ready? so am I!" said Mr. Phlegethon, who, though very averse to terminate an argument, was always ready to adjourn it on such occasions.

"Let his Lordship and Mr. Griffiths know. They have not come down stairs," said Miss Barbican.

"May *I* lead you into the other room?" said Wyniates, offering his arm; and, as they moved on, he whispered, "This office, too, I should have been deprived of in another minute."

They had scarcely entered the room ere Lord Barbican and Mr. Griffiths followed them.

The dinner-table was a field of observation for Wyniates. At another time, he would have been highly amused by watching the zeal with which Mr. Phlegethon *discussed* the "creature comforts" placed before him: had the curry-soup been a Calvinist, or the cod-fish a Catholic, or the water-

souchy a Baptist, or the beef *à-la-mode* a Methodist, or the tongue a Ranter, he could not have eaten them up more fiercely. But a passing glance was all Wyniates could afford to bestow on the busy plate of the divine. He saw with pleasure, that notwithstanding their having been placed next to each other by Lord Barbican, his niece and Mr. Griffiths seemed to find but little conversation. The young gentleman asked her to take wine, remarked on the fineness of the weather, and inquired whether she was fond of fishing. To the first she assented by a bow, to the second by a monosyllable, and she replied to the last question by saying she preferred it to shooting. Wyniates gave her a smile of applause for her wit. Lord Barbican endeavoured, by first talking to his niece and then to her neighbour on the same subject, to involve them in conversation; but he did not succeed. He therefore gave up the attempt for the present, and began to amuse himself with Mr. Phlegethon, whom he did the honour of employing as a butt. The chaplain was always much embarrassed by his attacks, as the fiery

spirit within him would have prompted those replies which a regard for the continuance of his salary, and a hope of future preferment to be obtained through his patron's interest, prevented him from indulging in.

"I say, old Phleg, I've not asked you very lately how the sale of your great work has been going on?"

"Your Lordship asked me the very day you left the Castle."

"Ay, but I've been out a week or two, you know; and it may have reached another edition by this time."

"It has not, my Lord."

"Sorry for that! Wyniates, did you ever see my chaplain's learned work? You must read it."

"His Lordship is pleased to joke with me, Mr. Wyniates," said Phlegethon, "and from so kind a friend, I am bound to take it in good part, as I know it is meant—"

"Oh, of course, Phleg, of course," said his Lordship. "You know the work is dedicated to me; and, though I should be sorry to have to

read it myself, I'll lend it Wyniates with pleasure."

"Ah, my Lord, if you would read it, it would alter your Lordship's views. I hope, Mr. Wyniates, you will do me the favour to give it a perusal."

"I shall be too happy," said Wyniates. "May I inquire the subject? Divinity, I suppose? What is the title?"

"It is on certain doctrinal points, which I wished to throw a further light upon. The precise words in the title-page I forget."

"Then I don't," said Miss Barbican, "they made an impression, which all the rest of the work did not efface; for I, like my uncle, have not read it."

"I can only advise you to do so," said the author.

"It is too difficult for me," said the lady, laughing. "Only think, Mr. Wyniates, of setting a young lady to read 'A Logical and Mathematical Estimate of the Probable Number of the Saved and Condemned; wherein it is most c

and satisfactorily proved that the latter will bear the proportion of twelve to one; by the Reverend Anthony Phlegethon, M.A., Chaplain to Lord Barbican, &c. in Two Vols. 4to., with Tables and a Plan. Price £1. 11*s.* 6*d.* Trash and Co.!'"

"I should certainly expect to find a great deal of curious speculation and abstruse calculation," said Wyniates.

"Nor will you be disappointed, my dear Sir," said the chaplain, eager to defend the child of his brain. "It cost me a long time to write this work, and I must think you will agree with me in saying it was not ill employed, when I assure you that few will be saved who have not read it, as I shall show by just giving you an analysis of the whole."

"Excuse me," said Wyniates, "as I am to read the book, which the high opinion I have conceived of your talents will not fail to insure my doing, I would rather not have it anticipated, even by the author;" and then, turning to Lord Barbican, he quickly introduced another subject. His promise, however, had gained him the heart

of Mr. Phlegethon, who took an opportunity soon afterwards, whilst Wyniates was speaking to Miss Barbican, of whispering to his Lordship, that "he thought Mr. Wyniates would have been one of the first men he had ever met with, had he had the inestimable advantage of an university education."

In the course of the evening Lord Barbican made a point of displaying Mr. David Griffiths' accomplishments to his niece by requesting him to sing a comic song. The young gentleman complied; his Lordship was highly delighted with the fits of laughter which broke in upon his performance, and little perceived that they were not so much bestowed on that as on the performer. Wyniates' more penetrating eye read in Miss Barbican's countenance contempt and aversion plainly expressed.

Ere he took his leave for the night, he begged Lord Barbican, in the hearing of Mr. Phlegethon, to lend him the work of that learned polemic.

On the following morning, he had already or-

dered his horse with the design of riding up to the Castle and offering to join Miss Barbican's equestrian party, when a little reflection induced him suddenly to ring the bell, and say the saddle was to be taken off again and his travelling carriage got ready as quickly as possible.

The servant came back to tell him the coach-horses were gone to be shod, and it would be an hour or two before he could set off. Two hours elapsed, and the carriage drove to the door. The servant announced it and Lord Barbican at the same time.

"Are you going a journey, Wyniates?" inquired his Lordship: "I see your carriage waiting."

"Only to London," replied Wyniates.

"Indeed! I am sorry for that. I hope you do not propose to make a long stay?"

"I hope I shall not. My business ought not to detain me above a day or two."

"How shall I get on without you to advise me about the lovers? It is lucky I stepped down, or I should not have had a parting hint. I thought I

would come and prevent your calling, as it would leave the lovers alone. Was it not a good smart idea?"

"And do they seem to have become lovers already?" inquired Wyniates.

"No; I mean the lovers that are to be. What did you think of them last night? I thought Adeline seemed amused by his singing."

"Very much so: I am sure your Lordship is right so far. And, tell me, how have they gone on this morning? Are they going to ride out?"

"Why, no: I proposed it, and offered David a horse, but he said he never rode any thing bigger than a pony, and he wished he had brought his own, it was so quiet."

"Yes, my Lord?"

"And Adeline said there was a very quiet donkey that our miller's grandmother rides to church upon on Sundays, and she thought that might suit him."

"And he is going to accompany her on t
said Wyniates, biting his lips to hide
that he could scarcely repress.

"No, no. I suppose she only said it for mischief; but I was pleased to hear it, it showed she felt on such easy terms with him. Don't you think so?"

"Quite! and so they do not ride! Well, how are they spending the morning?"

"Why, Adeline said she would not miss her ride, but would go out with her servant, unless you came up. But I told her not to do so till I returned, but to stay and entertain our visitor. So I've left them together whilst I stepped down to advise with you whether it would not be better for you not to call this morning; or else, if you did, to give you a hint not to take a long ride. However, I find you could not have come."

"No. Well, your Lordship seems to manage so adroitly, and to have so many 'smart ideas,' that I am sure you will want no assistance or advice from me; and I dare say, when I return in a few days, I shall find you have brought the high contracting parties to terms, and the very day fixed for the wedding."

"Do you think so? Egad, I am so glad! If I shall have made that progress, mind, I shall expect your company at the wedding. I should not think Adeline half married unless you were present, mind that. And now I will not detain you any longer — but I shall take a round, and not go back straight to the Castle, that I may leave the young ones longer together. Egad, I dare say he has had a kiss by this time, ay?"

"Hardly yet, I should think. May I load your Lordship with two messages: one to Miss Barbican, to say my horse has been once saddled to-day for a ride with her, but business has called me away for a day or two: the other to Mr. Phlegethon, whom I beg you will assure that I make his work my travelling companion, so eager am I to be edified by its contents."

"He will be the happiest and the proudest man in the world when I tell him so."

"Good bye, my Lord, and let me advise you to imitate the skilful driver who keeps his horses *well together* and pushes along. 'A word to the wise!'"

"I understand—good bye."

Lord Barbican started for his round, and Wyniates was whirled away in his carriage. At the first stage he took post-horses, and proceeded with all speed towards the metropolis.

Instead of reading Mr. Phlegethon's 'Logical and Mathematical Estimate,' he was immersed in far more matter-of-fact and worldly speculations. He had taken it for granted that Lord Barbican would press his niece to marry Mr. David Griffiths without loss of time, nor had he any doubt that she would positively refuse: there would be quarrel, he expected, and he should on his return find things on an unpleasant footing at the Castle; he should then come forward, put in his claim, and all would end in the regular way of reconciliation as laid down in the last scene of the last act of a modern comedy. But, turning his thoughts from comedy to tragedy, he reflected on the impediment that he had to remove before he could wed the niece of the Baron. There was his unhappy wife to dispose of, if possible, in some safer way. He must see Balderson and his wife, and arrange

that business. Then, he had yet to learn whether Mr. Townley and the heir-at-law had given credence to his letter, to which he had as yet received no answer, or whether they were making those inquiries which he was desirous of avoiding. And further, there was Margaret Brownsword, the injured and betrayed parent of his son, who had been sending frequent applications to him to be allowed to see her child, and whose mind, he felt, must be set at rest. She was the only person whom he had ever really known a regard for; and she had loved him "not wisely, but too well," for his own sake, when he was only her equal. He would not have let a thought for her have stood one moment in the way of his ambition; but, if, without running any risk, he could make some arrangement which would enable the poor girl to indulge her maternal yearning to behold her offspring, he was desirous of doing so, as some slight atonement for his cruel treatment, some little reward for her obedience to his commands, and her assistance in his crooked policy. The evening before she had withdrawn her charge

against Gordon in the presence of his late mistress and Mr. Townley, that wily individual had galloped over on his borrowed horse, not to the market-town, as he had alleged, but towards Coryton. He had put up his horse at a small way-side public house, and had walked on in the dusk towards the village. Carefully avoiding meeting any one, he had contrived to enter the lowly cottage where Margaret boarded, unobserved. He had severely chidden her for her rashness in disclosing to Miss Wyniates that he was the father of the child, and had induced her reluctantly to promise to retract the charge. He had told her that, if she did so, her son should one day be the master of all the Wyniates domains, that she herself should be maintained in ease and affluence, and that he would constantly see her, and eventually marry her. The words of the accomplished groom had always been her law: betrayed as she had been, she yet believed his promises; and she was driven to assent, when he drew the reverse of the picture, how if she persisted in her story, he should be discharged, and

all of them ruined; himself an outcast, and their boy a beggar. Nor had her compliance stopped here! When Gordon had married the heiress, and in progress of time told poor Margaret it was necessary to their child's welfare that he should pass for the offspring of a loftier mother, she had yielded him up to be carried far away from her, and, leaving her native village, she lived secluded, bereaved, and deserted, in a humble lodging in the suburbs of London.

Mr. Wyniates drove as usual to Valentine's Hotel, and, before he sallied forth, he summoned the landlord into his presence. From him he learnt that two gentlemen answering to the description of Mr. Townley and Mr. Walter Wyniates "had called only a few days before, and made several inquiries about Mrs. Gordon Wyniates, but he thought they had gone away quite satisfied with his answer, and without a shadow of doubt that it had been at his house that the lady had died."

Supposing them to be still in Town, Wyniates resolved to have an interview; for, he well knew that

if he could see them face to face, he could trust his own tact so far as to decide whether they doubted him or not: and as a knowledge of that point might influence his plans and proceedings with regard to his wife, the first thing he did was to ascertain where they were residing in Town. He sent his servant to make inquiries at one or two clubs to which he knew Mr. Townley belonged.

In the mean time, putting himself into a hackney-coach, he drove to the Hampstead-road, where in a small room on a second floor lived Margaret Brownsword. He inquired if she was at home; and he was told she had gone out, but would be back in less than a quarter of an hour. Discharging his coach, he walked up stairs, and sat waiting for her in her lonely apartment. It was a little square room, papered and hung about with a few coloured prints of the Prodigal Son, Queen Charlotte, Daniel Lambert, and other persons who had possessed sufficient interest in the eyes of the landlady of the house to have deserved that honour. Two tables and three chairs were the whole of the furniture. In a recess in the

wall were a few plain cups and saucers, a tumbler, and about three or four knives and forks. A little cupboard below was locked, in which Wyniates doubted not were her frugal stores of bread, tea, and sugar. A pen and ink were on the chimney-piece. Curiosity prompted him to open the door of her bed-room. A French bed without curtains, a washing-stand, one chair, a small looking-glass hung to the wall, and a few boxes were all the items a broker could there have noted down,—save only a little shelf, on which were a dozen books or thereabouts, some of them well known to Wyniates as his own presents in former days.

As he surveyed the scanty supply of necessaries which presented themselves to his view, his conscience smote him for his illiberal treatment of the once happy girl, whom his baseness had exiled from a home of comfort and peace. He resolved that at least that portion of his guilt should be lightened, and she should be enabled at once to remove to a more eligible habitation. He took out his pocket-book, and, transferring several

notes to his purse, laid the latter on the chair in the bed-room, and then seated himself, expecting her arrival. It was a long time since they had seen one another, and he feared she would be greatly agitated. He wished he had prepared her for his visit, and finally determined to go away before she returned, and leave a few lines to say when he would be there again. He had begun to write on a small scrap of paper, when he heard steps on the stairs. They were slow, and very different to those of the light foot of Margaret as he had been used to hear it. But it was Margaret, nevertheless. She had let herself in without the woman of the house seeing her; so that she was not informed that there was any one in the room. When she opened the door, she started nervously back; but in another moment, perceiving who it was, she gave a loud groan and sunk upon a chair.

Wyniates stood by, watching whether she would recover, which she did in a few minutes sufficiently to speak.

"Will you please to be seated, Sir? I shall be better soon; but I did not expect to see you, and it startled me; I am grown so nervous."

"I am sorry, Margaret, to see you in such uncomfortable lodgings. Why did not you say, when you wrote, that you were in want of money, and I would have sent you some, you know, and you could have gone to better?"

"Indeed, when I wrote about our poor dear boy, I could not think of myself or of any thing else."

"Well, I ought to have thought for you, but I've had much to distract me. I have called now about your boy."

"Is he well?" inquired the anxious mother.

"Quite well, and I am going to send for him to England. I must produce him to the Wyniates people, and, after that, he shall spend a long time with you."

"Oh, I am so glad! My fine boy! I wonder if he grows still like you."

"Upon my soul I don't know; but never mind that, and don't talk of such things," said Wy-

niates, his brow darkening at an expression which guilt construed into a reproach.

"I beg pardon; indeed, indeed I did not mean any harm. I am a poor ignorant girl; and I do not know how I ought to speak to you, now that you are so much above me."

"Speak to me as you always did, but do not make accusations."

"I only asked if the boy was like you; but I will not say it again."

"Do not. I will take care you have him with you ere long; and, when you play with him, think what a great squire you have made of him by doing what I asked."

Margaret sighed.

"If you do that, I must go—I cannot bear it."

"I will not sigh again, indeed: it is a habit I have got."

"And you, Margaret, shall be all the better for it yourself. Come, nobody will be likely to meet us if you walk out with me, and you have got your bonnet on: we will go and look for some better lodgings at once."

"Am I going out with you? Am I to walk by your side once more? Oh, that will make me happy!"

"Yet stop—I forgot, Townley is in town, and he knows you. Suppose he were to meet us! I had better go by myself. There, you are sighing! When I've found some good lodgings, I will bring a coach and take you to them."

"And shall I ride by your side? Oh dear!"

"I will look out about the back of the Regent's Park or along the New Road; or, should you like Hampstead?"

"Hampstead would be better for the child on account of the air, but either of the other places would be nearer for you to come and see him when you are in town, and then I should oftener see you too; so we will be there, if you please."

"And can you yet care about seeing me?" cried Wyniates, put for a moment off his guard by the last reason.

argaret burst into tears.

"Come, don't cry, my girl. I am going, and

will be back in an hour or so. Pack up your few things, and pay for your lodgings."

She shook her head.

"Nay, you will have money enough. Look on the chair in your bed-room."

With these words Wyniates hastened down stairs.

He walked round the Regent's Park, and succeeded in finding a handsome lodging on the west side of it. Having hired it, and engaged the maid to wait on the lodger he was about to bring, he took a coach and hastened back to the Hampstead Road.

Margaret returned him many thanks for his supply of money.

Her trunks were ready, and her landlady, seeing her under the protection of a gentleman, and having been paid the amount of her bill and all arrears in full, wished her good-bye, and said she was sorry to lose so excellent a lady. These were the first words of civility she had addressed to poor Margaret for several weeks.

They drove to the new lodgings, and Margaret's eye sparkled as she entered the neat and well-sized drawing-room, where, according to Wyniates' directions, a substantial lunch was set out. The disappointment of her hopes had been a severe blow to her, the deprivation of her child had been a heavy trial; but these, though more acute, had not been equal in power of depression to the more vulgar distress and the prolonged misery of coarse and scanty diet, and the perpetual prospect of actual want of sufficient food, even of bread. Against other afflictions the elastic powers of the heart will rally and rise again. Time has for them an alleviating power; the pang is forgotten, the wound is healed. But the hunger of one day will not make that of another seem lighter; familiarity with the evil does not reconcile to it; and it cannot throw a gleam of present enjoyment upon the insufficient crust, to think that to-morrow even that might be wanting, might be wished for and not had. God feeds the ravens; man feeds man: the overseer of the poor has his table

calculated, and will mete out enough to prevent starvation.

Wyniates was as nearly callous to all the better feelings of our nature as any ambitious man that ever lived: no sovereign ever thought more exclusively of himself. Yet even he could not, without a pang of shame and remorse, see with what a rage of hunger the poor girl fed on the unusual fare. Whilst he had been revelling in satiety and luxury, she, whom he had deprived of her father's humbler but substantial table, had been enduring want. He looked now on a care-worn countenance—a sunken eye—a wasted form: he had first known her a happy and a virtuous girl, with the springing step of the deer, and the light merry laugh of innocent gaiety and thoughtless joy.

The change in her position, the immediate relief, the hope of seeing her child, and the presence of one, whom, notwithstanding his ill-treatment, and the embarrassment his new rank occasioned her, she still loved, restored a transient rose to her wan cheek, and reminded Wyniates

of the peculiarly rich yet delicate bloom that had once been there. Her beauty was but the wreck and ruin of its former self; but still, in the amiable expression of the unusually perfect regularity of her features, there remained much of that fascinating charm, which had been able for a short time to distract the ambitious groom in the pursuance of the career he had chalked out.

He promised to visit her again in a few days, as soon as his engagements would permit, and returned to his hotel. His servant, he found, had not been able to discover Mr. Townley's residence, but he had been told at one of the clubs that he was in the habit of calling there every day. Wyniates sent the man back with his card, directing him to leave it for the porter to give Mr. Townley the next time he came there; but he had scarcely done this, and the servant certainly had not had time to execute the commission, when Mr. Townley himself was announced. He said he had been told at his club that there had been a servant making inquiry for him, and

when the livery was described to him, he was sure it was Mr. Wyniates'. He therefore came straight to the hotel, which he knew he always stayed at, being anxious to see him on the business of their late correspondence, whilst Mr. Walter Wyniates was in town.

Mr. Wyniates begged Mr. Townley to be seated, and, having inquired after his lady and Miss Forbes, he proposed they should proceed to business. To this Townley assented, and commenced with stating, that "he and Mr. Walter Wyniates had, upon the receipt of Mr. Gordon Wyniates' letter, written to the minister, Snacks, from whom they had received a satisfactory answer; and they further requested a friend of Mr. Townley's, who was travelling in the neighbourhood of Geneva, to ascertain the character of Snacks himself; and the result had been, that they found Mr. Wyniates' accuracy confirmed, and his account verified by a clergyman of unimpeachable integrity."

"That is fortunate," said Wyniates, "as I see by the strictness of your inquiry, that on my own

assertion there was placed but little reliance. This is scarcely the spirit which Mr. Walter can expect I should requite with a very liberal allowance."

"The blame is not his, but mine," said Mr. Townley. "He left it entirely to me, and I could not undertake such a responsibility without proceeding in a business-like manner. As it is, I have omitted many inquiries, which, if I had adopted the 'strictness' you complain of, I should have made: and I was induced to do so, because I was justified in relying on your assertions after I had found them so far confirmed. You must be aware that this christening is no legal proof of the birth, as it might have been a supposititious child. You laugh, and nobody supposes for a moment that it was so; but still you must admit, that, notwithstanding the largeness of the stake, the greatest 'strictness' has not been employed, when we have asked for neither midwife nor surgeon; nor, indeed, for the child itself, which, as far as I understand, has never been brought to England;

and in the case of your lamented wife, we have not asked for the doctor or the undertaker. We have in this latter instance rested quite satisfied upon the assurance of the man who keeps this hotel, and who tells us she died here."

"You have had then all moral evidence of both facts, Sir; and can have legal evidence if you like: I have no wish to avoid inquiry. Mr. Walter Wyniates cannot say so much for any claim upon me, which can only be a *moral*, and not a 'strictly' *legal* one."

"I am aware of that, and I think your acknowledging that he has any claim at all does you infinite credit."

"I am always proud to have Mr. Townley's approbation! And now, Sir, considering all circumstances, do you, who are well acquainted with the extent of the Wyniates' property, think the sum I mentioned in my letter reasonable and sufficient?"

"Quite ample. But I have a proposition—I ought rather to call it a request from Mr. Walter Wyniates on that point. Instead of an annuity,

he would be infinitely obliged if you would bestow on him a sum out and out, in order that he may be able to settle it on his future wife, Miss Forbes. I mention her name, because she is my daughter-in-law, and I should be sorry you should hereafter think I had had an interest in this negociation, which concealment on this point would have given you a right to suspect."

"Oh, no, I should under no circumstances *suspect* Mr. Townley."

Mr. Townley acknowledged the compliment by an inclination of the head, and proceeded:—"The fact is, Sir, this intended alliance was only recently, and since my writing to you, made known to me. Without affecting to act on any other motive than a sense of duty, I feel, as I stand to that young lady in the place of a father, that I am bound to look after her interests; and I told Mr. Walter Wyniates that I should advise her to decline the honour of his hand, unless he could make her some settlement. She had nothing from her father; but when her mother dies, she will have her property, which is small. I

give you these details that you may understand how far I am an interested negociator."

"You are very kind, and I well know that no interest would bias you unduly. But, Sir, suppose after I have given this sum 'out and out,' as Mr. Walter says, he should at any future time disturb me with inquiries and claims? You know, I make it a condition for my doing any thing for him, that there is to be nothing of that sort."

"You may be very easy, I should think; for you know he could make no successful claim, and he would be prevented from any merely frivolous and vexatious ones by the expense it would occasion him. Besides, unless something new transpired, gratitude would alone keep him from troubling you."

"Excuse my smiling, my dear Sir; but the excellence of your own nature misleads you as to the conduct of men in every-day life, where such a principle as gratitude is obsolete."

"You take a gloomy view, Mr. Wyniates."

"A just one. Would it were otherwise! I

can assure you there is within my own knowledge a case that would horrify your old-fashioned notions—excuse my calling them so. I know a person who is at this moment repaying another, to whom he owes all he has in the world, with treatment that you would, if I described it to you, (which I am not going to do,) call the most cruel and oppressive you ever heard of."

"Well, Mr. Wyniates, and the hatred and contempt with which you regard that person, as you, and all but the vilest of our kind must do, is a proof that it is contrary to our general nature. However, perhaps you will feel secure against any annoyance from your cousin, if he should go out and settle in Canada, of which he has thought, and which I have recommended."

"Now, Mr. Townley, you speak to the point. It is true, he may quickly return; but I shall not object to give him £5000 to be paid on his arriving with his wife in Canada."

"I will communicate this to him, and see you again to-morrow or next day, and I hope he will agree to the condition you propose. Shou

want to see me before I call, on this card is my present address."

Mr. Townley now took his departure, and (such is human nature!) he was not a little rejoiced at Wyniates' imposing a condition which would place between him and his unamiable daughter-in-law a conjunction-disjunctive no less wide than the Atlantic.

CHAPTER VII.

THAT very evening Wyniates despatched a letter to Geneva, directing the person to whose care his child had been committed, to repair to London with his charge as speedily as possible; and in the morning he called at Margaret's lodging, to inform her of his having done so. The poor girl was profusely grateful, and assured him she should be all impatience till she folded their dear boy in her arms. She was so little versed in worldly tact, that this little attention emboldened her, notwithstanding the repulsive coldness of his manner, to tell him she had heard of his wife's death, and that she hoped, for their child's sake, he would fulfil his former promise towards her.

At these words Wyniates rose angrily from the

chair on which he had seated himself, cast on her a withering look of contempt, and exclaimed: "You forget yourself, young woman—I am not a farmer's daughter's equal now. Is it not enough that I engage to support you in affluence, and your child in splendour? Go to! Since you must be married, I will look out for a husband for you—but I am not at liberty as you suppose—. Never speak of this again."

Margaret promised she would not, assured him she was conscious of her presumption in hoping a gentleman like him would marry her, which she had only ventured to think of for the child's sake, and finally declared she would never marry at all.

Appeased with this humility, Wyniates said he forgave her, and wished her good-bye for the present. He walked along the streets leading towards the place where his wife was in confinement; but on second thoughts he resolved to defer going to the house till the following day, before which he hoped to be informed as to Mr. Walter Wyniates' intention of emigrating. Nor was he

disappointed: in the evening Mr. Townley called at his hotel, and told him that Mr. Walter Wyniates was much obliged to him for his liberality in acceding to his request, and as he had already received Miss Forbes' assent to the plan in the event of their being able to execute it, and of her father-in-law's approving it, he had at once gone out to make preparations and arrangements.

Wyniates was rejoiced to hear of this determination, and Mr. Townley informed him that he should write for his wife and Miss Forbes to come to him in London, that the marriage might be celebrated without delay. They then entered into an understanding as to the time at which the money should be paid, and separated, each well pleased at the prospect of having one plague less in England.

When Mr. Townley was gone, Wyniates set off to see Balderson, with the full resolution to make his wishes understood, if his letter had not already done so, as the time was drawing on when his

plans required that his victim's sufferings should be terminated.

On arriving at the house, he found Mrs. Balderson only at home, her husband having gone out. He inquired how Mrs. Stacey was; and the tone in which the woman replied that she was in a very poor way as to health, daily growing feebler, struck Wyniates as so genuinely compassionate, that he felt convinced that she, at all events, was not pursuing the course he had hinted. She told him that poor Mrs. Stacey was better and calmer in her mind, and seldom said any thing at all irrational, except the name of her husband was mentioned, which always made her outrageous. She said she thought it would not be advisable for Mr. Wyniates to see her, and he replied he had no wish to do so. Whilst they were talking, Balderson came in. Wyniates in a moment perceived he had been drinking, and doubted not he was fresh from the public-house. He stumbled over the sill of the door, and falling against the clock, which stood near, knocked off

his hat. Instead of offering to pick it up, he was just going to kick it across the room, when he perceived Mr. Wyniates. He bowed respectfully, and said, "I beg your pardon, Sir; I did not know you were here."

"I want to speak to you, Balderson."

"Ay, ay, Sir, I know. Go and see how Mrs. Stacey is, wife; and, wife, I say, stay with her; I want to speak to the master."

As soon as Mrs. Balderson had left the room, he proceeded: "You have not spoken to Nancy there, I hope, Sir, about the subject of your letter?"

"No, Balderson! Have you?"

"No, no, Sir, a woman cannot keep a secret—and they are such fools—and this of mine has such a tender heart, and she is so sorry for her lady, it would not have done to have trusted her. Helloa, I don't feel very well: I've a little touch of my head-ache, Sir. Excuse me: it is very unpleasant, it makes the room spin round, just as if I was drunk; though I am as sober as a—a —sober as—David's old sow."

"Well, sober or not—"

"But I am sober, old cock; I say, my hearty, how are you?"

"Balderson!" said Wyniates, in a stern tone, "you forget yourself! Man, you have been drinking! How can I trust you?"

"Drinking! I've had nothing stronger than water," said Balderson, and then after a pause he added—winking and nodding his head—"with a little gin in it. That's all, upon my sacramental honour—that's all, all!"

"Well, when you are rational, I will call again."

"Are ye going? I'll go with you as far as the Horse and Groom. That sign would suit you, I'm a thinking, he, he—. Helloa, wife-o, look after the house; an't I careful, Sir?"

"Beast!" exclaimed Wyniates; but his reproof was cut short by a loud scream, which he knew came from the unfortunate prisoner, and then he could hear her in altercation with Mrs. Balderson. He could not distinguish all she said, but he heard her cry: "He said he was here—let me go—

Why do you hold me? I will go. Coryton—John Coryton—come and save me—oh—Coryton!" He was prevented from catching any more, as a door was shut with a loud noise, as if closed suddenly between them; and soon afterwards Mrs. Balderson came back and said "her mistress had heard Mr. Wyniates' name, and immediately after his voice, saying the word 'beast,' which she had thought he had applied to her. A fit had come on, and she had had great difficulty in keeping her where she was; but she was better now." She then apologized to Wyniates for the state in which he had found her husband, and assured him he was not often so off his guard. Wyniates desired her to put him to bed and let him sleep it off; and he promised to call again the next morning, when he hoped he should find him in a rational condition.

As he walked to his hotel, he could not avoid making sundry unpleasant reflections on the danger he was incurring in having an agent on whom he found his reliance would turn out to be misplaced. "Am I," thought he, "to run the

risk of putting this neck of mine into a halter? Surely, it were better, even now, to retrace my steps, to disavow Balderson.—Yet no! that cannot be—the funeral—the landlord—how could all I have said respecting them be explained away? I must on; I must confide, like the great Roman I have read of, in my Fortune! Have I not been a PROSPEROUS MAN, and are the hand of Adeline and the barony of Barbican more out of the reach of the wealthy Squire, than the representative of all the Wyniates was removed above the foundling and the groom? Besides, after all, I am inclined to believe Mrs. Balderson when she says this is not a habit of her husband's; for, had it been so, he would scarce have been always so discreet as not to have trusted my secret instructions to her. By the bye, it would be as well to know whether he has kept my letter: I must not forget to speak about that in the morning, and to destroy it or know it is destroyed."

From this subject his mind reverted to the party at the Castle; he fancied he

Barbican playing his transparent cards, and pursuing his shallow devices to throw the should-be 'lovers' together. He pictured him even going so far as to invite Phlegethon to take a turn upon the terrace and give him an analysis of his Work, whilst he left the young ones to their game at écarté, in the fond hope that the oft-repeated 'I propose' in their game might lead to some apropos and happy phrase of proposal in earnest.

How far he was correct in these imaginings was unexpectedly explained in the morning; for the post brought a letter which he knew by the postmark, and by being franked by Lord Barbican, must have come from the theatre of war; although he found it, on opening, not to be in his Lordship's writing, but in a hand that was strange to him. The letter consisted of two sheets closely filled, and, on casting his eye to the end, he perceived the signature — A. PHLEGETHON. He glanced at the contents, and seeing that they consisted of the promised analysis and a few suggestions for reading the work in a logical and mathe-

matical manner, and to advantage, he was about to toss the whole into the fire, when the postscript happened to catch his eye. It was to the effect that "Lord Barbican desired him to present his kind remembrances, and to say he had not time to write, as he was playing the old barrel-organ whilst Miss Adeline and Mr. Caractacus Goodall Griffiths were waltzing round the room: his Lordship desired him to send precisely this message, which he said Mr. Wyniates would fully comprehend; and merely to add, that when he tried to keep the horses together, they gibbed. For his own part, Mr. Phlegethon declared the meaning was not apparent to him."

"It is too apparent to me," said Wyniates, addressing his own thoughts. "He has been trying to force Adeline and David Griffiths together, and, not succeeding, he has sent for the elder brother, who it appears is so far different from the other, that he has his arms round Adeline's waist already. I must lose not a moment, but be off quickly to the rescue. And now, well done, old Phleg; thy intelligence has

fully repaid thy prosings, and I am abundantly rewarded for my ill-kept promise of reading thy invaluable Estimate. As soon as I have seen Balderson and this tiresome Townley again, I must start for Barbican Villa. Paws off! I shall not fancy Adeline if this waltzing is to go on, and, by all the powers, I recollect Barbican wrote word this Caractacus was a horse-fancier; so I suppose he will ride out with her, instead of moping at home like his brother, and be the very fellow for the girl. I must be quick!"

Mr. Wyniates summoned his servant, and ordered him to have the carriage packed in readiness to return home, as he was going to set off that day, and should travel all night. The man told him he had sent his linen to the laundress, and suggested the propriety of waiting till the next day for it; but Wyniates told him to get the things back as they were, or leave them to be sent after them, as he was in haste. He then got into a coach, and was set down about a quarter of a mile from Balderson's house, to which he walked on with rapid strides. He found Balderson sitting

by the fire, and looking very pale after his last night's excess. The man made many excuses, and Wyniates begged that such a thing might not occur again.

"Lord bless you, Sir!" said Balderson, "you may depend upon me. I know the old saying, '*When the wine is in, the wit is out*:' but still I must be drunk indeed, to let out what would hang both of us."

"Both of us?"

"Ay, you for setting me on, and me—"

"Setting you on to what?"

"To do what you told me in your letter. I knew what you meant, of course; and the very day I got it, I began to alter the medicine."

"You are a shrewd fellow, Balderson, and I knew my man. I thought you would understand me, though I don't think I spoke out very plainly."

"You talked about our irksome task being over, and then we were to be made quite independent."

"It does your penetration credit to have seen my meaning, and I shall keep my promise. Just

let me see the precise words I used. Have you got the letter?"

"No. It is up-stairs, locked up."

"Well, fetch it."

"But——"

"Nay, I only want it for a minute."

"I should like to keep it, Sir."

"I tell you, I will not keep it one minute; I give you my word: and till I have seen it, I cannot proceed."

Balderson rose slowly, and with evident reluctance went for the letter. He returned, and handed it to Wyniates.

The latter cast his eye over it, then stooping down, he took up the poker with one hand, and crushing the letter up with the other, and placing it before the very heart of the fire, he drove it far beyond the bars. Balderson sprung forward to save it, and Wyniates struck him with the poker heavily on the extended hand. The limb was stunned, the letter one mass of flame. Balderson staggered back, and in the first impulse of pain

and rage he seized in his left hand a knife which lay on a table near him.

"What mean you?" said Wyniates, still holding the iron instrument he had made so useful, but desirous of parleying.

"What mean *you*, Sir?" shouted Balderson, advancing one step. "What mean you, I say? How dare you strike me? How dare you tell me that lie?"

"I will pay for the blow with gold," said Wyniates, putting forward his most powerful argument first; "and as for the letter, it was a mistake."

"A lie, and not a mistake; you were afraid of my having it:—and as for your gold, why, at this moment, your very life is in my power; and, by my soul, I am half-disposed to have it. Left-handed I am more than a match—"

"Hear me a moment," interrupted Wyniates; "I did not mean to strike you, and I am very sorry you are hurt. The fact is, in drawing the poker back—"

"'Tis a lie—a cowardly lie! you struck me on purpose; you did it to prevent me from getting my letter, which I entrusted to you because you told me you would not keep it one minute."

"Nor did I."

"What—and laugh at me too! Was a blow not insult enough? Now, by all—"

"One word, Balderson," cried Wyniates, retreating a step as the other advanced the same. "One word. Why should you and I—"

He was interrupted by Mrs. Balderson, who had heard their loud and angry voices, and who now rushed into the room, inquiring what was the matter. Great was her amazement and alarm at seeing the two standing front to front, each with his weapon in his hand.

"What is this all about?" she exclaimed, advancing towards her husband.

"Keep off, woman," he cried, pushing her away, and pointing to his hand. "See that!"—The hand was bloody, and already much swelled.

"Have you done this?" she said, turning towards Wyniates.

"Unintentionally, and I—"

"It is a LIE! Wife, that man is a liar," interrupted Balderson.

"Nay, nay—come, here is some mistake, I am sure," said Mrs. Balderson, advancing again towards her husband. "The Squire says he did not mean it."

"Then the Squire, I repeat, lies. Squire indeed! We all know he was no gentleman—Squire! ha, ha!"

"Nay, Balderson, you should not go on so. This is wrong. Come, come. The Squire will set it all right. Come, let me tie some rag round your hand. Poor fellow! it is sadly bruised indeed!"

Wyniates perceived that the voice of pity had prevailed; the flashing eye was for a moment withdrawn from him, and he pursued the opportunity that seemed to present itself for making peace.

"I assure you, Balderson, I am seriously grieved to see I have hurt you so much. What can I do? Shall I go out and buy some balsam,

or have you any, Mrs. Balderson, in the house? I wish I could undo it; but since that is impossible, I will do all I can to repair the injury. Confound the letter! Do you think I would for the sake of twenty letters hurt one so severely, who has rendered me so many services—"

"And this is what I get for them! I 'll trust you no more."

"You shall not. I will at once put you in a position to have no occasion for trusting me. This very day I will make you quite independent of me and of the whole world."

"There, hear that," said Mrs. Balderson. Balderson shook his head.

"Come, I will trust *you* at all events," said Wyniates, going towards the fire, and restoring the poker to its usual place. "You see I have laid that by, and I heartily wish I had never taken it up."

"Well, then, since you say so, here goes," and with these words, Balderson tossed the knife

away from him, and threw himself down upon a chair.

The excitement he had been in had hardly allowed him to feel any pain from his wound: but now that he was somewhat calmed, he turned very sick.

His wife brought him a glass of brandy, and dressed his hand, Wyniates assisting in spreading the lint with the plaster she produced. This attention did more than all his words; Balderson thanked him, and held out his left hand, which Wyniates shook, and the reconciliation seemed complete.

Wyniates suffered a little time to elapse, and then requested Mrs. Balderson again to leave them alone.

"Look here, Balderson!" said Wyniates, taking out his pocket-book, and placing several notes to a considerable amount before him—"you shall not proceed upon trust altogether."

Balderson smiled as he put the notes into his

pocket; and Wyniates proceeded: "Now, tell me what you have done."

"I will," replied Balderson. "I have daily mixed with her medicine a small quantity of arsenic."

"You have?"

"Yes: so small as to be almost imperceptible; but it will tell in time, and I can see that it does tell, too, surely, if slowly. She rises worse every morning. I can assure you, Sir, it is no agreeable sight to watch a fellow-creature die by inches through one's own doing, as it were, and that, too, when she was so good a lady. It is this sort of feeling that has driven me to the gin-shop. I never used to go to such places, but I cannot do without now."

"As you say, Balderson, it is bad—this dying by inches. We break the neck of the fish we have hooked, or the bird we have shot, to put the poor creatures out of their misery. Mrs. Wyniates was a good woman, and would be sure to go to heaven."

"We shall go the other way, I guess," said Balderson, laughing hoarsely.

"What! are you afraid of the Parson?"

"No, no—I 'm afraid of nothing."

"That 's the man for my money. Well, then, if you are not afraid, suppose you were to increase the dose?"

"No, no, Mr. Wyniates, no more of that—not a grain more from me. I shall discontinue the dose entirely till you have given us that place in Wales you promised in the letter you burned 'by mistake.' I must have no more mistakes. No, no."

"Be it so. Since I have unfortunately lost your confidence, I will trust you without your trusting me. You see by what I have now given you I am in earnest. I will go to Wales this very day on purpose; and when I either bring or send you the title-deeds of the place I am about to purchase for you, you will then alter the quantity?"

"I will."

"That then is settled. You shall have them without fail and without delay. In the mean time you will go on with the smaller quantity?"

"Not a grain!"

Wyniates laughed, shook him again by the left hand, and took his leave. He proceeded to call on Mr. Townley; and, in a few words, told him he was compelled by business to return to Wales, but he would come up to London as soon as he could; and, in the mean time, he thought they could transact all that remained to be done, with regard to Mr. Walter Wyniates, by letter or by agent.

He then despatched a few lines by the twopenny post to Margaret, telling her of his departure, and that she should hear from or see him again as soon as her boy got to London.

He also left directions with the landlord of his hotel, that, should the boy arrive before he returned, he should let him know immediately, and take care of him till he could send instructions whether the person who had the charge

of him should bring him on to Barbican Villa, or not.

Having made these arrangements, he ordered his carriage to the door with four horses, and set off for Wales.

As he travelled all night with the same number of horses, and allowed himself only half an hour for refreshment, he was in a fair way of accomplishing his rapid journey under the four-and-twenty hours; until his speed was checked at the last stage but one, where, being now on a cross-road, he was compelled to go with only a pair, for want of more, and those that he did obtain were far from good ones. Chafed as he was at this delay, he was yet doomed to a farther hindrance when he arrived at the next and last place for changing horses: it was a mere village, with a good-sized inn, which had been built chiefly for the accommodation of tourists; and it unfortunately happened that so many parties in search of the picturesque had arrived and passed on just before Wyniates, that the landlord's small

stables presented a vacuum. He had tasked the animals who had brought him so far to their utmost speed, and it seemed hopeless to attempt another stage with them; then he might be detained two or three hours waiting till a pair should return, and, when they came, they would not be fresh.

As he paced angrily up and down in front of the inn-door, cursing the staring fools who had deprived him of the coveted posters, he teazed himself with fancying all the time that Adeline was whirling about in the muscular arms of the young Welshman. His servant approached, touching his hat, and said, "Would you please to allow me, Sir, to borrow a pony and ride on, and send you the carriage-horses, or the gig, Sir?"

"No," said Wyniates; "but borrow or hire a pony, and I'll ride on myself, and you can come after with the carriage as soon as you can get horses."

"But, Sir, there's no pony here fit for you to ride. The landlord said he would lend me his little boy's, which is a poor shabby thing, Sir,



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not know me, it d
landlord I shall be
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"But, Sir—"

"But, Sir!—Go

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he had scarcely entered the outskirt of the Park, through a part of which ran the usual bridle-road, which he had chosen as saving him an angle, when the very parties he wished to avoid appeared in sight. He knew Miss Barbican afar off, and he doubted not that her companion was his dreaded rival, as there was no one else, he was persuaded, who would have kept by her side as she galloped down the steep slope from the Castle. With the design of avoiding meeting them, he turned out of the path, and began to cross the park. He had not gone very far before he heard a voice behind him calling out to him to stop; but he took no notice till the horseman came up to him at a rapid pace.

"Holloa, you, Sir," he exclaimed. "What do you mean by riding there? Is not the path good enough for you?"

A desire to preserve his incognito induced Wyniates not to give way to the anger that burnt within him. When he heard his voice, he was perfectly certain who the person was that addressed him, so much did its tone resemble that

of Mr. David Griffiths. The offensive manner of the speaker would have exasperated him, even if he had not been one towards whom he was previously ill-disposed: however, he answered mildly, that he had only just left the path.

"And what right had you to leave it at all, sirrah? Lord Barbican finds it nuisance enough to have a road through his private grounds, without fellows like you trespassing in that way."

Wyniates felt his choler rising to fever-heat; it was with the utmost difficulty he managed to say,—

"Lord Barbican would not object to my riding here: he is a friend of mine!"

The tall horseman burst into a loud laugh. "A friend of Lord Barbican's! ha, ha! That's devilish good! ha, ha, ha! A friend! You look like the friend of a Lord, and that pony looks like the steed of the friend of a Lord! Ha, ha, ha! No, no, my friend, that story will not go down. If you had been his friend, why, his own niece would have known you; and yet she it was

who just told me to ride after you, and request you to keep the path, as her uncle is so angry if any one rides over the turf."

"Oh, then, it was Miss Barbican who ordered me to return to the road: well, I shall have no difficulty in obeying her; but I did not choose to attend to the mandate of a park-keeper, or a house-steward, or a Lord's valet, or something of that kind, as I supposed you to be. Now that I know it is her order, and you her footman—"

"Footman, fellow! Do I look like a footman?"

"Groom, meant to say."

"Do I look like a groom then?"

"Very."

"This insolence is too much!" exclaimed the horseman, raising his whip.

"Stop, Mr. Caractacus Goodall Griffiths," said Wyniates.

The young man, at the sound of his own name, dropped his arm, and looked much surprised.

"You know me? Then that makes it only the worse to say I look like a groom, when you know me to be a gentleman."

"And I, Sir, am a gentleman, too, and the friend of Lord Barbican, as you will find if we ride towards his niece, who is waiting for you on the road there. I professed to take you for a park-keeper or a groom, by way of a mild reproof for your mode of telling me that you disbelieved me when I claimed his Lordship's friendship. Accident has compelled me to be so humbly mounted; but, if gentility depends on one's stud, I suspect that mine will be found rather more than equal to your own."

"Ride with me to Miss Barbican, and, on her confirming your words, I will at once apologize; if she does not, I shall have something further to say."

With these words Griffiths cantered back to his fair companion, followed by Wyniates. The former had scarcely time to inquire whether she acknowledged an acquaintance on the pony,

ere she recognised who it was, and advanced to meet him, exclaiming:

"Indeed I do! Mr. Wyniates! We thought you were in London. When did you get back?"

"I am now on my way home. I have left my carriage for lack of post-horses, and mounted this poor ill-looking little animal, which has not found favour in the eyes of your companion."

"I perceive you are a friend of Miss Barbican's," said Griffiths, "and therefore I beg to express my sorrow for the language I used."

"And I mine," said Wyniates, "for treating you as a house-steward, valet, or groom."

"What!" cried Miss Barbican, laughing, "did you really take Mr. Griffiths for a servant? I thought you more discerning."

"It appears," said Griffiths, "he knew me all along, though I never had the honour of seeing him before; but he affected to take me for something else because I did not recognise his gentility on that charger."

"It was very excusable; I might, but for your



clothes with him,
to measure me
are few so stampe
would betray th
were they disgu
mercers."

"Come, Mr. W
"you must not pr
remember it was I
so stop for my sak

"It is done," s
prove I have not
fellow, I must tell
this hour yesterday.

"Indeed! Y

ride. As soon as I have put off my travelling costume, I am going to call on his Lordship; and perhaps, if I ride up, I may be not quite so humbly mounted."

"I dare say we shall meet, as we shall not be long out. We are only going as far as the Canal-lock beyond the waterfall."

"The waterfall is beautiful, no doubt; but why you should go a quarter of a mile further to see a muddy canal pass through a couple of wooden gates, I cannot conjecture. There is certainly nothing very picturesque in that: but perhaps your friend has not seen a lock before?

"Oh, a *many*," said Griffiths, "and jumped over a many—which Miss Barbican will not believe. So, I am going to show her, and we have a pair of gloves on it—and something else, have not we?"

"No, nothing else," said Miss Barbican, blushing.

"Well, Mr. Griffiths, for the sake of Miss Barbican's gloves and the disputed *et-cætera*, I must not wish you success. If you got a ducking

you would look rather absurd; but the risk is worth running, considering the stake and the greatness of the feat itself. You must be very active, quite a kitten!"

With these words pronounced in a tone not very flattering, Wyniates rode off towards the Villa.

CHAPTER VIII.

"I SEE I did not come any too soon," muttered Wyniates to himself. "I must put this overgrown boy out of the way somehow, or he will jump himself into Adeline's good graces. Let me devise some means for terminating his visit at the Castle, and that speedily, or the mischief will be done: and then it would be as well too to sound my Lord, and see how he is disposed: perhaps, I may put in my own claim; but that depends on the degree of favour which he exhibits to this Griffiths. However, courage thou whose name has been Coryton, Gordon, Wyniates! Thou shalt be Barbican yet!"

Musing on these matters, Wyniates had arrived within fifty yards of his door, when he was roused by the din of laughter and loud voices. His ear

quickly recognised that they proceeded partly from his own servants. He rode up to the dining-room window, and there beheld a sight that would have greatly amused him, had it not made him too angry to enjoy the "high-life-below-stairs" fun that was going on. About a dozen ladies and gentlemen sat round a table well supplied with poultry, game, meat, and wines. At the top of the table, and with her back to the window, sat his housekeeper, dressed like a duchess, whilst at the other end, and facing him, his butler was playing the host. At the sides were the housemaids and one or two strange young ladies invited no doubt from the nearest village, to whom the footmen and the grooms were paying the most polite attention. One of the footmen wore his livery, but the other had on his master's best dress suit, of which the waistcoat was of a most expensive kind, being a very richly watered blue silk embroidered with real silver flowers. The scullery-maid and two stable-boys waited on the party. The whole were too intent on themselves and each other to observe the observer, the rather

as a juniper-tree served to conceal the greater part of both the small steed and his rider. So many were talking at once that it was two or three minutes before Wyniates could distinguish a word; but, a lull coming over the conversation, he overheard the gaily-attired footman address the housekeeper in a simpering tone,—"Mrs. Gordon Wyniates, may I have the delight of taking champaign with you?"

"With much pleasure, Lord Barbican."

His patience was now exhausted, and he resolved to break up the party. He got off his pony, opened the front-door, and proceeded towards the dining-room. The scullery-maid was just bringing out a dish. She saw her master's face—she uttered a loud scream—and the dish was crashed into twenty pieces.

"I must absolutely dismiss that careless servant," exclaimed the butler.

"You are all dismissed!" cried Wyniates, in a clear, slow, deliberate tone.

If a thunderbolt had fallen amongst them, the amazement and fright of the group could scarce

have been greater. They had felt themselves perfectly secure, as the servant who was with their master in London was to give them by post timely notice of his return. The man had written the moment he had heard of his master's intention, but owing to its having been past post-time that day, and to the great speed of Wyniates' travelling, he found they were almost at home before, as he well knew, the letter could have arrived.

Hence had arisen his anxiety to avail himself of the opportunity, which the delay at the last inn had seemed to present, for him by riding on to give his friends of the servants'-hall warning to set their house in order. Wyniates' impatience had unknowingly defeated this scheme; and the man, not daring to leave the place till he could bring on the carriage, was obliged to trust to the chance of the party's being engaged in no particular revelry. That chance had been against them, and they were caught in the very act. All were equally confounded, but not alike were the effects of the surprise on all. The butler dropped

on his knees; the housekeeper fainted; one of the housemaids screamed; the other went into hysterics; the liveried footman sat still with his mouth wide open and his eyes fixed; 'Lord Barbican' buried the glories of his waistcoat under the table, where he met one of the fair visitors who had slided down from the opposite side into the same refuge; another ran to the window, threw it open, stepped out, and fled unbonneted with her hair streaming in the wind.

"Ladies and gentlemen," exclaimed Wyniates, "within half an hour my house is to be relieved of every soul of you, and if I miss one article of property beyond these squandered provisions, the law shall take its course. Out, ye dishonest crew! And you, fellow, come from under the table and strip off the clothes you have polluted. Your wages shall be paid to-morrow at my gate,—outside of it, mind ye, for ye tread no more on ground of mine. You may lodge where you can this night; your visitors may entertain ye in turn. Out, I say! You scullery-girl, and you two boys, as ye did not partake of this feast.

and were doubtless led into your smaller share, may remain, and only you."

With these words, Wyniates flung himself out of the room, and went to his dressing-room. His rage was some time in cooling, and his equanimity was far from being restored, when his watch, which he had laid before him, showed the appointed half hour to have elapsed. He rung his bell, and the less guilty footman appeared.

"Are ye all ready, sir?" inquired Wyniates.

"All, sir, except Mrs. Culpepper, the housekeeper, who has been fainting several times."

"Faint or no faint, out she goes. If she cannot walk, she must be carried. You will all march down the lawn, that I may see the backs of you. Lay your boxes and your own things—and be careful none of my property is mixed with them, do ye hear?—lay them together in the yard, and tell one of the stable-boys to take them all down to the outer gate in a cart."

"I am very sorry we have—"

"I want none of your excuses or apologies. Let this be done forthwith."

The man withdrew, and in a few minutes Wyniates had the satisfaction of seeing the discarded group walking away in rather a dejected manner. They were soon followed by the cart containing the boxes; and at that sight Wyniates felt himself sufficiently appeased, by the summary justice he had executed, to recover his temper, and finish changing his dress. Before he started for the Castle, he gave directions to the scullery-maid and the two stable-boys, now the whole of his establishment. He ordered one of the latter to remain with the horses, and the other to assist the girl in carrying away the remains of the banquet, and setting the house in order; and told them he should probably borrow one or two of the servants at the Castle, till he could engage others of his own. He then mounted his horse and cantered up to Lord Barbican's. His Lordship readily undertook to spare two or three servants for as long a time as they should be wanted at the Villa, and his steward was directed to meet the dismissed party at the place Wyniates had appointed, and to settle their wages for him.

Lord Barbican was highly amused at the account of the party and its sudden dissolution. Wyniates himself was now sufficiently cooled to join in the laugh. He then mentioned that this was not the whole of his adventures, and related his dilemma about post-horses, and his rencontre with Mr. Griffiths.

"You would be surprised to see him here?" observed Lord Barbican.

"No. I understood your Lordship's message."

"Oh, ay, in Phleg's letter! I 'd forgotten that. Well, and I must tell you all about it. You must know, as soon as I got back, the day you set off for London, I acted on your suggestion, but it did not succeed."

"Perhaps you were too abrupt?"

"Perhaps so. For I called Adeline into my study, and asked her at once if she had any objection to a husband."

"That was rather sudden! And what did she say?"

"She said she had never thought about such a

thing, and she knew nobody she cared enough for. I asked her what she thought of David Griffiths; and she laughed at the idea, and said she was sure I should not think of asking her to have him. I told her he was the very person I had chosen; and she said she must positively decline the honour; she had infinite respect for me, and all that kind of thing, you know, and it was an affair for life, a solemn engagement and a deal of girlish stuff about happiness and affection, and that sort of thing. So I gave up the point, and wrote to invite the elder brother, who came directly."

"And how does he take?"

"Oh, very well. They ride out together, and dance together till they make my arm ache with turning the organ, which plays the Copenhagen waltz—and then, whilst I am resting, he shows off by vaulting over the chairs and jumping over the sofas."

"Accomplished youth!"

"He is a noisy, romping, tearing fellow; he

distracts Phlegethon, and helped to drive his brother away. The poor lad said he felt unwell, and must go home to nurse himself; but really, I think he was tired out, and thought himself neglected. You see, when I found Adeline would not have him, and I had got another for her, I had to attend to them and see them well thrown together; so I desired Phlegethon to entertain David, and he read the lad a good deal of his book, but he did not seem amused; and, as I said, pleaded illness, and took himself home."

"And is his brother more attentive to your Lordship than he used to be? I hope you have no complaints on that score?"

"I must say he takes hardly any notice of me. He invited me one day to play at fives on the terrace against the south tower, and I told him I was too old; to which he made some rude reply, as, that 'I never should be younger!'"

"I am sorry to hear it. If he treats your Lordship with so little respect now, when he comes as a stranger and a visitor to your house, what

would he do if he were to get a footing in it, and feel a sort of right to do as he liked without restraint?"

"Very true; but whom can I get for my niece? You know the objection to Lord Lloyd; and, besides, I wrote to his father declining the honour of his alliance."

"I have a suggestion to make to your Lordship."

"Yes?"

"First, I must be certain you do not feel anxious to have this jumping gentleman to support the honour of your noble house."

"I would rather have had his brother."

"Suppose, my Lord, I name to you another gentleman, whose fortune is far beyond the Griffiths's, who, though rather older, is still of suitable age; and who, to my certain knowledge, has the greatest regard for Miss Barbican, and the most sincere respect for your Lordship?"

"Good heavens! if you knew of such a one, why did you not name him before? What could you be about, Wyniates, knowing this, to

me lose my time on that ugly eyesore, that disgusted Adeline, and this ill-mannered mountebank, that is barely civil to me?"

"Nay, my Lord, I did not know of this before, at least not the whole of it. The party, I knew, from the commencement of my acquaintance with your Lordship, had a most exalted opinion of yourself."

"I can't think whom you mean!"

"But it was whilst your Lordship was absent at Owen Hall that I became aware of his attachment to your niece."

"And you started off for London without giving me a hint! On the contrary, you advised me to press David Griffiths upon Adeline! I cannot see your motives, Mr. Wyniates!"

"I will explain them. Your Lordship did me the honour to confide to me the circumstance of the Earl of Aberdovey's having made a proposal to you. Regard for your Lordship, and the anxiety to preserve from extinction the title you have borne, induced me to dissuade you from accepting it, and to suggest some other party,

and I named the Griffithses amongst others. Your Lordship was so pleased with my counsel that you acted upon it, and seemed exceedingly desirous of bringing it to a successful termination."

"But still, if you had afterwards found any one, as you say, so much more eligible—"

"My Lord, I was in a delicate position, as you will not fail to recognise when I name the party. I have told you I became aware of his attachment to Miss Barbican during your absence. You had desired me to be much in her company, and prepare the way for Mr. David Griffiths to her heart: in the attempt I discovered—"

"What? who?"

"That I had lost my own!"

Lord Barbican gave a start of the most genuine and unaffected surprise, and Wyniates continued in a more rapid tone:—

"Yes, my Lord, it is Gordon Wyniates whom I have to propose for an honour, of which I am conscious I am unworthy, and to which I should never have presumed to aspire, had not your

Lordship shown a willingness to bestow it on parties to whom in birth and station I am at least equal, in fortune considerably superior, and in respect and regard for your Lordship no less so."

"But, Wyniates, do you think Adeline would not object to you as so much older than herself, and also as having to become, by marrying you, a step-mother? Your son would be an impediment, I fear."

"My son, your Lordship knows, is amply provided for by the Wyniates property, which is entailed on him. If your Lordship is so kind as to give your niece any fortune, let it all be settled on herself and her family."

"She will have all I have, Wyniates; and the Peerage, as you suggested, I am anxious to manage to have secured to my future nephew."

"Your Lordship will do me the justice to recollect that that suggestion occurred to me the first time we spoke of the subject, long before I had any idea of my present sentiments. I had then seen little of Miss Barbican."

"I perfectly recollect that circumstance; and, Wyniates, what I have got to say is this, I'd rather you married my niece than either of these Griffithses, as you well know; and you know too that I don't stand much upon romantic attachments, and that sort of thing; but I think I should hardly be using Adeline well, after bringing the youth here on purpose, if I dismissed him, supposing she is become attached to him."

"Your Lordship, as ever, displays a kindly and correct feeling; and, believe me, I share in your regard for Miss Barbican too sincerely to desire to be related to you at the expense of her happiness. But Mr. Griffiths has been here only a few days, and there is nothing so very attractive about him that he can have fascinated your niece already. Allow him to go away for a time, and give me a chance."

"But I cannot turn him out of the house."

"Oh, no—I would not have you do so. If I fail, he is to come back and be in *statu quo*.

Leave it to me to make him take a voluntary exit. You say stratagems are fair in love."

"You are a shrewd fellow, Wyniates, and I leave it to you, provided only that you do not compromise my hospitality."

This point being settled as he wished, Wyniates turned the conversation by asking Lord Barbican whether he knew of a small farm to be sold, as he was anxious to purchase one to bestow on an old and faithful servant of his late wife."

"I have one myself that I should be glad to dispose of. It is small, not above five-and-forty acres, and my reason for wishing to get rid of it is, that it is upwards of twenty miles off, and I have nothing else near it. I am purchasing all I can west and south of my house, being anxious to extend my limits in a ring-fence that way. I sold the Villa you live in, and some other property near it, because it was scattered and beyond the turnpike-road, which I wish to make my boundary in that direction."

"And what price does your Lordship fix?"

"We had better have it valued."

"Very well—I am anxious to complete my purchase, either of this or any other farm, without delay, and to establish the worthy man and his wife in it."

"This is a noble act, my dear friend, and renders me more desirous than ever to have you related to me. Let us walk to the library, where I can show you a little plan of the land, and a sketch of the farm-house. It is a very substantial and handsome building."

When the equestrians returned, there was a considerable change in Wyniates' manner towards Mr. Griffiths. He heard Miss Barbican's account of his prodigious leap with an approving smile, and then invited him to take a turn as far as the stable, as he said he was desirous of proving that he had not boasted of his stud without some grounds, by showing to him one specimen. "The horse I have brought," he continued, "to set me right in your eyes, after my exhibition on the pony, is thorough-bred, and I gave three hundred

guineas for him: you shall say if I paid too dearly."

"It is a high price. I never went beyond a hundred," said Griffiths, "and as high as that only once."

"Perhaps you suspect I have a design to tempt you to buy him of me? I would not take double the money, I assure you; and, indeed, I have made the animal a promise never to part with him. I told him so, Miss Barbican, the day you had been riding him."

"He is a fine fellow," said Miss Barbican, "and I have half a mind to be one of the party, to go with you to the stable and call upon him."

"Nay, though I have no wish of dealing with Mr. Griffiths, I have something to say to him: so, instead of calling on my favourite, let me take him a message to say you will ride him again to-morrow."

"I believe he would almost understand what you said, he is so sagacious! Well, tell him so then; I shall have no objection."

"I will," said Wyniates, leading Griffiths out of the room.

Whilst they were gone, Lord Barbican entertained his niece with an account of their friend's dismissal of his servants, and the cause of it. They were still laughing at the impudence of the transaction, and Miss Barbican was wondering whether one of the housemaids had honoured her so far as to assume her name, when the two gentlemen returned. Miss Barbican had felt a little uneasy at Wyniates' declining her offer to accompany them, as she feared he might revive the quarrel of the morning, but the conciliating and affable manner of Wyniates had sufficiently reassured her to prevent her expressing her misgiving. She was quite set at rest by hearing Griffiths say, as they entered the room, "Oh, no liberty, my dear Sir; on the contrary, I am sincerely obliged to you."

"What do you think of the horse, Mr. Griffiths?" inquired Miss Barbican.

"I admire him exceedingly. He is the most perfect creature I ever saw!"

"You shall see me ride him to-morrow, that is to say, if he received my message favourably."

"I am sorry it will not be in my power to be of your party. I must take my leave early in the morning."

"What, are you going to leave us? This is a sudden resolution!"

"Why, I have been all the day in forming it; but I knew this morning that business required me elsewhere. You remember I received a letter?"

"Yes—but I thought you said it was from your father, and merely a bit of gossip about the health of the dogs, and other equally important matters."

"Did I?" said Griffiths, colouring. "I had forgotten—but—I ought to go."

"Talking of leaving us, Caractacus?" interrupted Lord Barbican, who had taken up a book when Griffiths began to announce his intention, in order to hide the smile which Wyniates' expedition in getting rid of his

rival had excited—"Sorry to lose you, my boy!"

"Your Lordship is very good, and I'm greatly obliged for your kindness and hospitality, of which I shall be ready to come and partake again on some future occasion, for the sake of my rides with Miss Barbican."

"Ay, ay, come again."

"But, my Lord, you do not press Mr. Griffiths to prolong his stay now he is here," said Miss Barbican.

"No, my love, I thought I heard Mr. Griffiths say he was called away by business, and, as I hope neither you nor I have done any thing to affront him, I do not suppose it is a mere excuse. I therefore rather ask him to come again, than to stay now."

"Your Lordship speaks like a Chesterfield," said Wyniates; and Miss Barbican admitted that her uncle had judged the more correctly of the two.

"By the bye," said Lord Barbican, "I shall

expect you to take up your quarters at the Castle, Wyniates, till your establishment is renewed."

"Your Lordship is very kind, but I cannot think of such a thing."

"Nay, you must."

"Your Lordship does not recollect. Excuse me;" and with these words Wyniates took Lord Barbican's arm, and led him off to a window, where he proceeded in a whisper, "I shall be delighted to come to you on that pretext to-morrow, after Griffiths is gone. But, my Lord, you were playing the devil with my little stratagem!"

"Little stratagem!" said his Lordship, in the same low tone, "I'm all amazement at your quick success, and curiosity as to the means. But I thought making your empty house an excuse to invite you here, and throw you and Adeline together, was a good smart idea, eh?"

"So it was, my Lord, an admirable idea, but it clashed with what I've been doing in that quarter. I told Griffiths, quite confidentially, that

his being here was a great inconvenience to your Lordship, who had certain important business on your hands which the presence of guests in your house prevented your attending to; but you were too delicate to give him a hint."

"But my hospitality! You know we Welshmen pride ourselves on that, and I fear you have compromised mine!"

"By no means: your Lordship cautioned me of that; and, so far from thinking you use him ill, the youth believes you have been entertaining him at great inconvenience for some days past, because your hospitality would not let you turn him out; and, indeed, he declared he felt inclined to think you a better old fellow than he had done; and, you know, he said he would come again; whilst, to me, he professed the greatest obligation."

"Ay, ay; he did say he would come again—he did. You are a sharp fellow, Wyniates; but, egad, I was very near dishing your 'little stratag Of course, then, what he alleged about the was a mere excuse?"

"Which I had suggested to him, not knowing he had told your niece that it was only from his father, and all about dogs, and so forth."

"How confused he looked when she reminded him!"

"He did. Let us go to them, or else, perhaps, if they talk together much, the truth may come out. Your Lordship's not pressing his stay, by the bye, but inviting him to come again, seemed to confirm my story."

To this remark his Lordship gave a most knowing nod, by which he meant to claim as designed, what he had really, as Wyniates well knew, done quite accidentally. Wyniates, however, not the less, in admission of the claim, nodded again. They then returned to the two they had left, and Lord Barbican inquired whether his niece had seen Mr. Phlegethon since the morning. She replied she had not. "You must know," said Lord Barbican, turning to Wyniates, "he seldom appears just now out of his own room between breakfast and dinner. He is much engaged in writing a work in reply to the only reviewer

who has noticed his 'Estimate,' and whom, he assures me, he shall utterly confute, discomfit, and put to as much shame as one of his unblushing race can know. We shall be sure to have him, however, at the dinner-table; for which, Miss Adeline, I may as well tell you it is time to prepare, unless your hair, and that sort of thing, will be settled in half an hour's less time than usual."

"I can dress my hair twice, good uncle, in half an hour."

"You are tolerably expeditious—but it is time you set about it. The bell will ring directly."

Miss Barbican left the room; and, in a minute or two, Griffiths did the same. As soon as they were alone, Lord Barbican gave orders for his steward to attend and receive any further directions Wyniates might have to give as to paying off his late servants and engaging a fresh set. The steward suggested, that as Mrs. Jenkins Jones was breaking up her establishment, Mr. Wyniates might perhaps like to have some of her servants.

"A good idea, Strainer," said his Lordship; "a good smart idea! Mrs. Jenkins Jones, you must know, Wyniates, has been trying with a few hundreds a year to rival her neighbours, and us amongst the rest. The consequence is, she is obliged to quit the Principality, and go and retrench at Bath, or some such place. She is a particular friend of ours, and I can speak for the goodness of her cook. She made admirable curry, faultless vegetable-soup, and her omelets—oh, *mon Dieu!*—You are laughing? Perhaps you think I want her to be kept in the neighbourhood!"

"No, no; only at the warmth of your praise."

"And besides, Adeline will ride up with you in the morning after Griffiths is gone, and introduce you, and you can have the characters at once."

"I will certainly inquire about the cook your Lordship recommends."

This point being determined, the steward received his dismissal, and the gentlemen separated: Wyniates took care to lose little time in

returning to the drawing-room, in order to prevent Miss Barbican and Griffiths from being alone together.

There was no one in the room, and he threw himself upon a small couch which was placed in a recess behind a pillar. He had not long occupied this position, where he lay reflecting on his good fortune in being about to get rid of his rival, and to be staying under the same roof with Adeline, and speculating on her feelings with regard to Griffiths and himself, when the door opened and Mr. Phlegethon entered. He cast his eyes around, and, not perceiving Wyniates, he supposed he had the room all to himself. For a short time he seemed buried in thought, after which he broke forth in the following words:—"Well done, Anthony Phlegethon! Thy pen may rest now: the work of retribution is complete! Bitterly shall that wretch that styles himself a critic, and thee, 'an arrogant and blasphemous Quack,' repent his pernicious words. Out upon the vile herd! They are like unto the nasty flies that

come buzzing about our sweet works, contaminating them with their touch. Again, they are like unto cuckoos, that, building no nests of their own, convert those of other and better birds to their own use. I could prove them by '*Celarent*' to be Harpies, and Scorpions by '*Darii;*' by '*Baroko*' I could class them among the plagues of Egypt. However, I have trodden on the head of one of the odious race. Methinks it would be well to speak to Mr. Wyniates, who, I hear, is returned, about dedicating my work to him: he alone has duly appreciated my 'Estimate,' as I will explain in the Preface; and he has, besides, some livings in his gift! I will send up to solicit a private audience in his dressing-room; or, stop, I will go and tap at his door myself. He cannot, he will not surely refuse to have his name handed down to the remotest posterity—"

"For an ass!" said Wyniates, rising from the sofa, as Mr. Phlegethon left the room. "I must not have this folly brought home to me. Let me see how I can avoid it. Come, Wyniates, thy

brains must not fail thee in so small a matter. I have it!—I 'll manage him, I warrant. I hear steps: yet they seem too fast for his!"

Mr. Griffiths entered the room. He had come in the hopes of finding Miss Barbican, whose presence had suddenly acquired a value in his eyes, of which he had not been conscious till he found he was on the point of quitting it. Young hearts frequently need this sort of strong hint to teach them their own feelings, which are new and strange, and they are too thoughtless to analyse. Instead of the young lady, he found only Wyniates, to whom he again repeated his thanks for the friendly hint he had given, and he inquired whether he knew how long Lord Barbican was likely to be absent.

"About a month," said Wyniates, "I believe. Shall I drop you a line, as I live so near, to give you notice of his return? or would you, instead of volunteering another visit, wait for an invitation? I will take take care to remind his Lordship, as I long to have you back, that I may ride a steeple-

chase with you, to efface the memory of the pony."

The youth laughed at the reminiscence of the scene, and thanked Wyniates for his promise. Whilst they were speaking, Mr. Phlegethon entered the room.

"Oh, Mr. Wyniates," he exclaimed, "I heard you were come back from London, and I rejoiced with exceeding great joy—yea, and I have been to your room, and, lo! you were not there."

"No, here I am, happy to see the learned author of the 'Estimate.' By the bye, what an infamous attack that—"

"You have seen it, then? After exhausting the usual phrases of their euphuistic vocabulary, they finish by calling me an arrogant and blasphemous Quack! Think of that!"

"Do they indeed?"

"Do they not? I thought you had seen it."

"Why, no—not exactly seen it: but I've heard of it, and, would you believe it, I was so shocked,

and it made such an impression, that I actually dreamt of it!"

"You do not say so!"

"Indeed I do, and a very remarkable dream it was. I thought I saw you, Mr. Phlegethon, in those very tights, with that same venerable powdered head, that same coat, and that identical greasy collar—"

"It was scoured, Sir, last week—"

"Tush, man, you know I'm dreaming. That very greasy collar, that very, very dirty cravat—"

"I've just been turning it inside out."

"Still it was dirty in my dream, you know; and I thought you advanced and offered me a book; but it was not the 'Estimate,' but more like a pamphlet."

"Oh, wonderful! Did you actually dream all this?"

"And more. I thought you asked me to write my name on it."

"Your name! Miraculous!"

"And I was about to do so, when—"

"Do it now, for this is beyond us," said Mr.

Phlegethon, sinking on his knee, and drawing from his coat-pocket a large MS. book. He pointed to the first page, in which were written the words " respectfully dedicated to," with a space left for the name. Mr. Wyniates started with affected surprise; young Griffiths with real amazement stood beside Mr. Phlegethon, gazing alternately on Wyniates and on the book. Miss Barbican at this moment entered the room, and her astonishment at the position and the countenances of the group almost equalled theirs. Mr. Phlegethon put up his hand to her in a solemn manner, and the young lady understanding it as an injunction to silence, seated herself on a chair.

" Proceed, Mr. Wyniates," said Phlegethon.

" When a hand appeared to issue from the book itself, and traced the words ' To POSTERITY,' in a fine Roman hand!"

" The heavenly vision be obeyed," said Phlegethon, rising and advancing to a table. He took a pen and filled up the blank space as he had been warned, then restored the volume to his

pocket, and folding his hands over his breast, with his eyes cast up to the ceiling, he slowly walked out of the room.

When he was gone, Miss Barbican asked for an explanation of the scene she had witnessed, and, on hearing the story of the dream, she laughed outright. Wyniates laughed too, and Griffiths, seeing that, was more perplexed than ever. Mr. Phlegethon soon returned, his countenance still glowing with faith and wonder. He was very much offended by Miss Barbican's scepticism, and not less so by his Lordship's, who, on joining the party, treated the whole in the same way, and said it was a hoax of Wyniates'. But on the latter, who, when Mr. Phlegethon reappeared, had resumed his gravity, winking to his Lordship, he suffered himself to be convinced by Mr. Phlegethon, who argued that, "as, although his Lordship knew he was writing a book, he could not tell to whom it would be dedicated, he himself having only recently decided, and having kept his intention secret, the dream must have been supernatural. If his Lordship had not

forgotten his logic, he would have made it demonstratively clear in the figure '*Fresison.*'"

But it must have been even a greater miracle than this that would have detained the Divine in its vindication after the dinner had been announced, or have spoilt his appetite when seated at the glittering board of Gotham Castle, where the vapour of savoury dishes and relishing wines soon banished from his mind the disagreeable image of the reviewer, and the mysterious transaction of the dream.

CHAPTER IX.

On the following day, Griffiths being departed, Wyniates was restored to his post of escort. Miss Barbican, mounted on his admired horse, cantered by his side, as they pursued their route towards the residence of Mrs. Jenkins Jones. She had come to it on the death of her husband, when she began to enjoy having her own way and the control of her income, with all the delight which the long previous deprivation of both inspired. She took a lease of the estate and a moderate-sized house called Llwdthffydth Grange; but, neither liking the address, nor being able altogether to pronounce it harmoniously, she had changed it to Jones Hall; and, to correspond with the alteration, she had had battlements built round the roof, and raised a Gothic tower,

with a clock in the centre, and a flag-staff on the top.

Miss Barbican and Wyniates were informed that Mrs. Jones was at home, and they were conducted into her presence by one tawdry footman, whilst another, with tags as long, held their horses. They found the old lady seated in the "Eastern Saloon," wrapped in a Persian shawl, with a turban fronted by a diamond crescent, on her head. She rose to receive them, shook Miss Barbican by the hand, bowed to Wyniates, and ordered the servant to "tell the under-butler to furnish lunch."

"You must excuse taking it in this apartment, my dear Miss Barbican," said the old lady, "as my dining-room is full of confusion."

"Oh, pray do not mention it," said Miss Barbican.

"Nay, then, if you will not take it—never mind the lunch, Phillpotts. You are aware, Miss Barbican, that I am removing?"

"It was on that account we called," replied the young lady.

"A thousand, and ten thousand thanks, my dear young friend! attentions at these times——"

"Nay, Madam, to tell the truth," interrupted Miss Barbican, unwilling to receive acknowledgments she did not deserve. But Mrs. Jones had the more shrill tongue of the two, and she proceeded:—

"Attentions at these times are particularly grateful to the heart; in my instance, doubly so, because ill-natured people have gone so far as to say I have spent all my fortune, and am going away to save; whereas, in reality, I am quitting the Principality because the air does not suit me, and I am about to sojourn at Bath, Cheltenham, Leamington, Buxton, Brighton, and several other places, for my health; which when I shall have fully re-established, I propose taking some elegant but small mansion near the metropolis, and where, when chance, or caprice, or fashion draws you to that focus, I hope you will not forget to pay a visit to your attached friend Mrs. Jenkins Jones."

Wyniates thought the fluency of t

would quite overpower Miss Barbican, who hesitated, from the reluctance she felt to undeceive Mrs. Jones as to their true object in calling; he, therefore, put in his ever-ready aid:

"It is a delightful thing, Madam, to renew old ties, and I am sure Miss Barbican's amiable heart will respond to your invitation. I know the regard she has for you, and an idea has just occurred to me, whereby perhaps it may be in my power, as her friend, to—"

"Ah, Sir, I see how it is! I see how it is! Her friend! Ha, ha, ha! Perhaps, rather more than a friend? ay? You will engage to bring her, I suppose?"

The old lady laughed, Miss Barbican blushed, and Wyniates closely watched her countenance. He, however, added:—

"No, Madam, I have not the power of influencing Miss Barbican. What I meant was simply this: as you will naturally not encumber yourself with all your establishment, which appears very large, whilst you move through so many watering-places, I thought you would be

glad to know they had got into other situations. Now, I want a housekeeper, a cook, a——"

"Cook! I've the best in the Principality! and, I must say, this setting up housekeeping does look very, very ominous! Ay, Miss Barbican?"

"Oh, my dear Mrs. Jones, Mr. Wyniates has kept house many years: he is not beginning now. It is the gentleman who bought our Villa."

"Indeed? You don't say so! Well, I heard he had married Miss Wyniates, the great heiress, whom, by the bye, I have seen more than once! But you looked so young, Sir, that I should not have thought it could have been you."

"I have had the misfortune to become a widower. But, as you remark, my poor wife was old enough to have been my mother, as I am, I believe, even younger than I look."

"Well, Sir, I am proud to have made your acquaintance; and, indeed, I should have called when you settled in the county, but my carriages were out of repair at the time. However, to

return to the servants:—my establishment could not be large, you know, in a house like this. I had but twelve, and some of them I dismissed some time ago in contemplation of my removal, and one for insolence, that had come as meek as a lamb to be hired, but, when she learnt there was a prospect of my parting with her, treated me, as the species always do, with the utmost impertinence."

Now, in this enumeration, the old lady had counted offices and not heads, as her servants'-hall was the same still as it had always been, with the exception of the supposed lamb, and contained precisely half the asserted number of domestics; who, however, each bore two characters: thus, her house-steward and butler were one and the same person; one of her footmen fulfilled the duty of under-butler, and the other, of coachman, which was however a sinecure, as the carriages never happened to come home from the coachmaker's, where they were supposed to be under repair. In the same manner, the three females had shared amongst them six posts; the

housekeeper and cook being one; one housemaid was also lady's-maid, and the other had the less delicate duty of cleaning the dishes.

Wyniates engaged the well-reputed cook, and then he and Miss Barbican rose to take their leave.

"Good-bye, my dear young lady, and I wish you much happiness. Good-bye, my dear Sir, and I wish you the same. Miss Barbican's cheeks told me I had guessed rightly, and I don't see any objection to a gay young widower like you. I should have none."

Mrs. Jenkins Jones laughed till her sides ached; and when Wyniates had assisted his companion, who blushed more than ever, on to her horse, he turned round, shook the old lady heartily by the hand, and wished her good-bye with more show of friendship than Miss Barbican would have expected him to have evinced for one whom he had seen only for a few minutes, and who had chattered so ostentatiously.

They rode for some time in silence; at length Wyniates, endeavouring to give his voice a

humble and distrustful tone, said, "he hoped Miss Barbican was not offended?"

"With what?" exclaimed the young lady. "Why should you think I am offended?"

"Because you do not speak to me. And yet you cannot but acquit me of all participation in Mrs. Jones's remarks about the circumstance of my being at liberty to marry, and the suitableness of your age and mine, and our stations being so nearly equal."

"Nay, she said nothing about our stations as far as I heard: but she is a silly talking old woman, with her Eastern Saloon, and her *under*-butler, and her false pretences."

"It is a mistaken pride, no doubt," said Wyniates, who having said all he wanted to say at present, and wishing it rather to work its effect before he renewed the subject, suffered himself to be led away to another:—"but still, pride of every kind has a certain redeeming nobleness about it."

"No, only such pride as Milton's Satan, or any where the object is grand; but this

pretension of magnificence, this outside show in common matters, is paltry and ridiculous."

"I believe I must yield to you, Miss Barbican; your judgment is generally right, your taste ever faultless."

If compliments could inspire love, and attention secure regard, Wyniates would have been quite certain to have won both from Miss Barbican. He was constantly at her side, and, being now domiciled under the same roof with her, he had a thousand opportunities of showing his assiduity and devotion. Did she draw: he was at hand to mend her pencil, and to watch and applaud the progress she made in giving to the rose-bud, which he had gathered as the pride of the parterre, a more enduring and hardly less natural existence. Did she play on her piano: he was there to turn over the leaves, and breathe out the whispered applause of "Beautiful!" or the not loud but deep gratitude of "Thank you!" Was she inclined to the less sentimental occupation of the needle: he was to be seen seated near her, reading

her the last new work, or select portions of Shakspeare. So available did the quondam groom make his early taste for literature! Yet, notwithstanding these opportunities, he still waited for, without finding, a moment when he could feel persuaded that he might give utterance to the ever-present wish with a certainty that he should not meet a denial.

Day succeeded day, and the careful scrutinizer of countenances in vain looked in the eye of his fair companion for the sign he sought. He could perceive plainly that, though she seemed amused with his society, there was no sentiment there of warm regard, no tenderness, nothing like love! He now despaired of inspiring her with that passion, and resolved to rest satisfied with the hand, since he could not win the heart. But, in order to be certain of obtaining that, he still continued to proceed with caution; and a slight illness, which confined Lord Barbican to the house, but which that nobleman had considered too trifling to require the interposition of Mr. Graves, suggested

a plan to his mind by which he expected to forward the desired consummation.

First, however, lest Griffiths should have gained any favour in the lady's breast, he resolved to make him appear undeserving of her regard, and, what he well knew would be more to the point, undesirous. He therefore contrived, one day when he was alone with her, to lead the conversation to him.

They had been laughing at Mr. Phlegethon's credulity in believing the story of Wyniates' dream, by which he had managed to avoid the honour intended to have been thrust on him. Miss Barbican observed how well he kept his countenance, "and Mr. Griffiths, too!" she added, "the look of astonishment he had assumed seemed quite genuine; when I entered the room he really appeared almost as much struck as Mr. Phlegethon."

"And so he was," observed Wyniates; "the look was genuine; at least, he hardly knew whether to believe me or not,—and so it was half-genuine, we may say. You may be quite sure

he has not much power over his countenance after the confusion he exhibited when you detected that the letter he had pretended to have received from his father really came from that Miss—I forget her name."

"I detected! nay, I know nothing about it. I know he said he had had a letter that compelled him to leave us, and I do recollect his looking a little confused when I reminded him that he had in the morning told me that it was only about dogs, and so forth; but I really thought it was from his father."

"Oh, no: you remember our going to the stables?"

"Perfectly; you went just before he said he must go home?"

"Exactly. Well, at the stables, I talked to him about a steeple-chase; and he told me he must defer accepting my challenge for the present, as he had received a summons that very day which he could not but obey. He then drew a letter from his pocket, kissed it, told me it was from a lovely creature almost as tall as

himself, who had written to say she had found his absence insupportable; and, like all shallow people, he seemed delighted to have picked up a confidant, for he went on to give me her name, which I forget, and several other matters, which I was surprised he should entrust to any stranger, most of all to me, with whom you know his acquaintance was so slight and recent, and had commenced certainly not on the most friendly footing."

"And do you not remember the young lady's name?"

"Positively I forget it — it was a hard Welsh one, though. However, she is scarcely entitled to be called a lady, being, I think, an inn-keeper's daughter."

"Shocking! What would his friends say?"

"Oh, he told me his father had opposed it a long time, but, at last, had consented on account of the girl's appearance, as he said they would make the finest couple in Wales. But be sure you don't mention this to his Lordship, or any body, as he told it me quite in confidence,

and I really ought not to have said a word to you about it; but I was led on by your speaking of his keeping his countenance; and, besides, I know you may be trusted with a secret, being gifted with a portion of discretion far beyond your sex."

Miss Barbican assured him he might depend upon her; and Wyniates expressed his pity and regret that the young man should degrade himself by so low a taste, as if there was not beauty enough to be met with in his own station!

Leaving her to digest this news, he next sought Lord Barbican, who was seated in his dressing-room, in his slippers, with a basin of broth before him, but with no other signs of the invalid. Wyniates inquired whether his cold was better; and his Lordship assured him "he was nursing himself a little, though it was unnecessary, in order to cheat Graves, and to be quite well to-morrow."

"I do not mean you to be well so soon," said Wyniates, smiling.

"How so?"

"I mean to turn your illness to good account!"

"What plan now?"

"I will tell you, my Lord," said Wyniates, seating himself on the opposite side of the fire. "You must know, I have been for several days making accurate observations on the state of a certain young lady's sentiments, and the result is that I find her heart is entirely disengaged. I have not made my report to your Lordship till I had managed to be convinced beyond a doubt that she had not any regard for that stout young harlequin; for, had it been otherwise, I should have felt averse to prefer the request I am about to make to your Lordship. I well recollect a remark you once made, and which evinced that depth of judgment for which your Lordship is so distinguished, namely, that people in a particular rank have duties towards their families which demand, to a certain degree, a surrender of those feelings of love and romance—"

"And nonsense—yes, I think so, Wyniates; and you agree with me?"

"I do, my Lord. But still, had I found Miss Barbican actually attached to another, I should have felt a scruple, a hesitation, a delicacy a—"

"Come, come, Wyniates, you are not remarkably scrupulous, I fancy."

Wyniates laughed, and replied, "As far as a little stratagem goes, I am not, as I am about to prove, and as I have your Lordship's authority, I believe, for not being. But, in the regard I feel — nay, your Lordship looks incredulous and impatient!—I will, therefore, forbear the attempt of persuading you what my feelings really are, and, merely protesting against your not admitting them, I will at once say that I have found Miss Barbican to be not attached to any one else, and therefore I am inclined to believe, if your Lordship will assist my views, that she may be induced to bestow on me the honour of her hand, and I must trust to being able to inspire her hereafter with that regard I feel I have not yet been able to win."

"I have told you before how much I should be

delighted to have you for a nephew, and, since I do not sacrifice Adeline, by first bringing forwards a young man and then thwarting an attachment I myself had promoted, as you find she did not care about Griffiths, I will lend you all the assistance I can: but do not deliver me over to the tender mercies of Mr. Graves, which, what you said about my illness leads me to fear, may be part of your plan."

"Your Lordship's penetration, as usual, has hit the mark. I want you to profess to be much worse than you are; to be desirous of settling your worldly affairs; and of seeing your niece established in life."

"I catch the idea. Well, I have always said a little stratagem is fair in love-affairs, and I am fond of a bit of plot; but I 'm no match for you, Wyniates."

"Your Lordship forgets the round you took to leave certain persons together; you forget planning the whist party with the same view; you forget—"

"No, no, I have manœuvred a little, but this feigned disease is a device on a grander scale."

"Which I know your Lordship will equally carry through."

"But, to keep up appearances, I ought to call in Graves, and then we must make a confidant of him, or he will find out there is nothing the matter with me."

"Depend upon it, he will not: he will, on the contrary, prove to you that you are much worse than you suppose. Does your Lordship forget he has drugs to make up, and a bill to make up, too? You wrong the acuteness of the profession!"

"Ha, ha, ha! What a fellow you are! I certainly have heard of bread pills and coloured waters for imaginary maladies."

"To be sure. There are honest and conscientious doctors, no doubt, as there are honest and conscientious lawyers, but both are wonderfully scarce productions. I will bet your Lordship a new gun, or I will bet you (only tha

I have no right to ask for odds) the Manor of Wyniates—"

"You cannot stake that. It is entailed, you know, on your son."

"So it is. Well, I will bet you every thing else I have in the world, my Gordon property, my Villa which I bought of your Lordship,—all and every thing against Miss Barbican's hand, as far as the disposal of it lies in you, that he will order you some medicine."

"I have promised you all my interest in Adeline already; and, besides, I myself am so much of your opinion that I will wager no more than sixpence."

"Small."

"For a Lord!" said Lord Barbican, laughing, as he took Wyniates' hand in token of accepting the bet.

"Before I go and announce to Miss Barbican how much worse you are," continued Wyniates, "I wish to speak about the farm you are to sell me."

"Wait a little time, and I will include it in Adeline's present portion."

"Your Lordship displays your usual generosity; but I should prefer finishing that transaction by itself, if you please, as I am anxious to put the parties into possession of it without waiting till I know my fate with the fair Adeline."

"You are a kind-hearted person, Wyniates, and I will tell you what I will do. I will direct my steward to give you the deeds at once. We will have the house and land valued afterwards, unless you let it be as I said."

Wyniates expressed his acknowledgements, and Lord Barbican, summoning his steward, gave directions that a conveyance should be prepared, and the title-deeds of the farm be delivered to Mr. Wyniates without delay. As soon as the steward was gone, his Lordship said, "it had occurred to him that he should never be able to keep his countenance when he came to talk to Adeline about his days being numbered, and that sort of thing."

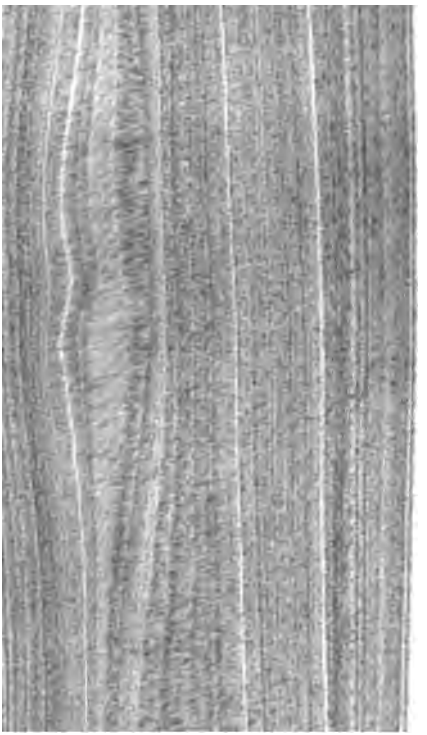
"Never mind," said Wyniates, "if you find yourself obliged to give way to laughter, laugh hysterically."

"Egad, that is a good smart idea. I'll try." And his Lordship laughed till he cried.

"You do it marvellously well!" said Wyniates; "and now I will go and give my false bulletin, and request Miss Barbican to send for Mr. Graves."

Miss Barbican, little conscious of the fraud, received the intelligence with real alarm, which was increased by the circumstance of her uncle's usually enjoying the most excellent health. She instantly despatched a messenger for Mr. Graves, and then accompanied Wyniates to Lord Barbican's room. As they were going he told her his Lordship seemed nervous and inclined to hysterics. They did not come on, however, whilst his niece remained, as he was able to answer her solicitous inquiries with a due gravity.

Wyniates left the two together, and desired a servant to tell the steward he should be glad



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"We will hurry things forward; you must pass a bad night, and be worse in the morning. We will talk of calling in a physician."

"Ay, ay, and I happened to meet Dr. Pewet going out to the sea-side the other day, as he told me, with his only remaining patient. We can send for him; and there is no other within twenty miles, thank God."

"Whilst he is being sent for, you can talk to your niece, say your malady is partly on the mind, and speak of your title's extinction."

"Yes, Mr. Wyniates, I shall not laugh when I speak of that."

"No, my Lord; I enter into your feeling. I trust you will yet keep it long, and leave it with a prospect of perpetuity."

The plotters pursued the course they had decided on. Wyniates spent the evening tête-à-tête with Miss Barbican, as he sent Mr. Phlegethon to entertain his Lordship by playing with him at cribbage and cassino, telling him he was on no account to talk much, as his patron's health would not bear it.



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"I had better not keep him waiting," said Miss Barbican; and she hastened to her uncle's room.

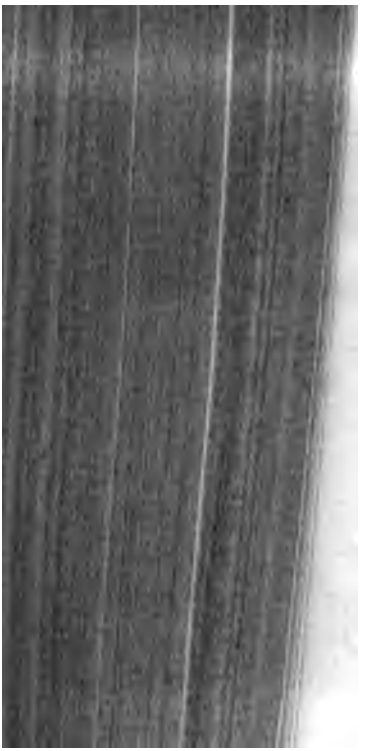
He was in bed, and, though the curtains were drawn, she could see he looked very pale, which she naturally attributed to his illness, never dreaming of the hair-powder which Wyniates had bestowed on his cheeks: she inquired 'how he felt?'

"Much the same, my dear Adeline. Sit down by my bed-side: I have something to say to you. I have no doubt I shall be soon better; at least, I hope so, and I am sorry to hear you have sent off for Dr. Pewet. However, as I am not used to these attacks, I feel a little nervous and low. You know, Adeline, if any thing should happen to me—"

Here his Lordship put his hand over his eyes, and Miss Barbican exclaimed:—

"Pray, do not think so dismally. It distresses me to hear you!"

"Well, my love, I hope it will not be so; but if it should, you know my title would be



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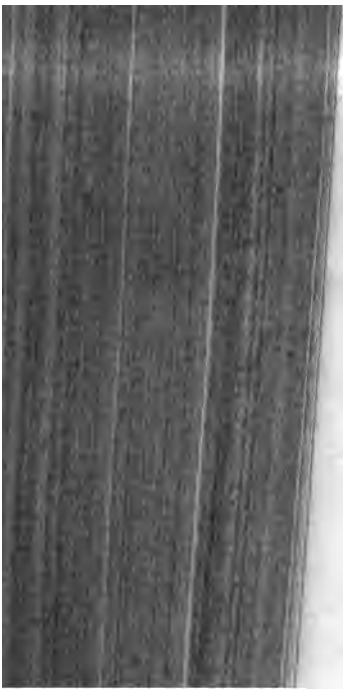
on my mind, and I believe my illness arises a good deal on that account; and, if you accede to the request I am about to make, I have little doubt, and, judging by my feelings, I might say I am certain, I should be well in a day or two. Will you grant it?"

"My dear uncle," said Miss Barbican, "after what you have said, and what Mr. Wyniates said to me a few minutes ago, when he announced your Lordship's desire to see me, I will not pretend ignorance of what the nature of the request is. I suppose you allude to him?"

"I do. Have you any objection to him?"

"I have no positive objection; but, on the other hand, I do not feel any particular regard for him. I have looked upon him as a pleasant companion in my morning's excursions, and treated him as a friend—rather as your Lordship's friend than my own. But as for marrying one to whom I [illegible]ifferent—"

"[illegible]ours, Adeline, my wishes to



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"No, my Lord."

"Is there any one else?"

"No. But I am very young—"

"And I am dying, he, he, he, perhaps, he, he—"

His Lordship hid his face under the clothes. When he reproduced it, it had recovered its grave look but lost a little of its paleness. His Lordship resumed:

"Now, Adeline, supposing you were obliged to choose of those I have named, or of any others—"

"I hardly know any others, my Lord. We live so out of the world."

"Well, then, of the three I have named—Come, say which. David?"

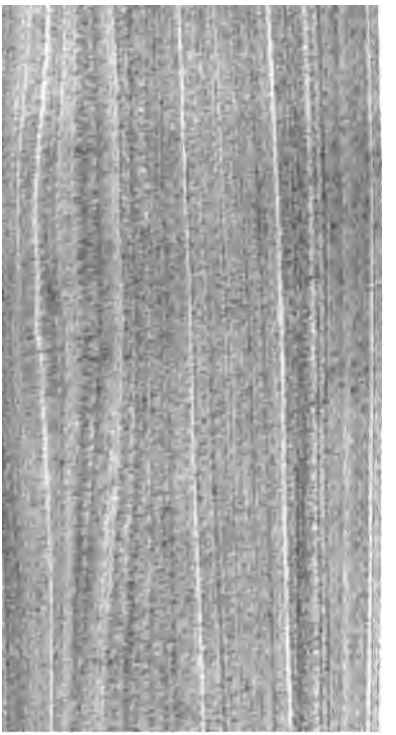
"No."

"His brother?"

"No."

"Wyniates, then?"

Miss Barbican did not answer. David Griffiths had been out of the question. Caractacus she had learnt was engaged to some one else. Wyniates, she knew, was her admirer. Still, tho



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he requested her to retire and consider of what he had said, and in the mean time to send Wyniates to him.

Miss Barbican kissed his hand, and left the room in tears.

She found Wyniates where she had left him, waiting to hear the result of the interview. He advanced to meet her, took her hand, looked in her face, and seemed hesitating what to say.

"My uncle wishes you to go to him," said Miss Barbican.

"And is it from him I am to hear my fate?" inquired Wyniates. "Nay, then, I know my doom! and yet I would rather have heard from your lips even the worst."

"My uncle will not deliver you an answer now, at all events. He has given me the night to consider of it."

"Oh, Miss Barbican, what a night of suspense for me! and yet that you condescend to give me this consideration claims my warmest gratitude. It is beyond my deserts! I know not what t think, to do, to say! and my kind, my am



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"I regret to hear your words. For your sake as well as my own, I ought not to let you unite yourself to one who entertains for you a different feeling—I hope we may always be friends."

"Well, Miss Barbican, let me have the night to pass in something short of the certainty of despair! Let my hopes live in doubt till the morning! I will go to his Lordship."

With these words, he hurried out of the room.

As he entered Lord Barbican's apartment, his Lordship peeped from under the clothes, and, seeing who it was, he gave way to a fit of most unrestrained laughter. He then recounted to Wyniates all that had passed between himself and his niece, and received much praise for the ability and talent with which he had played his part.

"But, Wyniates, I say," said Lord Barbican, "upon my soul, I must have something to eat."

"Well, my Lord," replied Wyniates, "only wait a little while and I will alter your regimen. We must press on, and you must be worse before you are better. Do you think you could

rave a little? Are you capable of a delirious effusion?"

"Hardly, I fear. My laugh to Adeline was not very hysterical."

"Ha! I've another idea! I'll bring Miss Barbican in with me, and if she promises to have me, do you make her swear it."

"But, I say, are not we going rather too far! To be sure she has no objection to you."

"None, and I promise your Lordship to make her a kind husband. We had better not give in: so you must be worse, if you please, and try to be slightly delirious."

"Well, go and bring her."

Wyniates went to find Miss Barbican, but, not succeeding, he sent a servant to look for her, and learned she had retired to her own room. He desired to see her maid, and by her he sent a message saying he particularly requested to see Miss Barbican for a few minutes.

On her making her appearance, he said, he was sorry to tell her he had found his Lordship much worse, inclined to be delirious, but he had

soothed him by telling him he had reason to hope for a favourable answer from herself. "When he seemed restored," continued Wyniates, "he instantly relapsed, and I really think it will be serious, unless you would allow him to suppose you have altered your mind. Perhaps, you would not object to go with me, and say you have done so."

"I do not like deceit."

"Nor I; but I think it would be justifiable in such a case as this, in so sudden an attack. It would be a pious fraud!"

"Mr. Wyniates," said Miss Barbican, "since you say you think it advisable for my uncle's welfare, I will go with you, and in his presence I will say I accept you, but I must not tell him an untruth!"

"Can I believe my ears?" exclaimed Wyniates. "Do I hear aright?"

"Yes. You persist in asking my hand when you know how only I can give it. You are rash; but it is yours. In my uncle's presence I will

say the same, and what I promise in his presence shall be sacredly fulfilled."

Again and again Wyniates pressed the yielded hand to his lips, and then, drawing it through his arm, he led Miss Barbican into her uncle's room.

As they entered, his Lordship, with his face half-buried under the clothes, began to cry, "They come, they come! Oh, prolong my name, let it not perish!"

"Excuse me, my dear Miss Barbican," said Wyniates. "Will you have the kindness to withdraw for one moment? I think I can calm his Lordship best alone. I have been used to people in this way."

"I will wait at the door," said Miss Barbican, retiring.

His Lordship still went on:—"Barbican, Barbican, Barbican! Is the title to be lost? Hellos, Wyniates, I thought Adeline was with you," he added, peeping out of his place of concealment. "How did I do it?"

"Hush!" said Wyniates, putting up his hand, and going up to the bed. "Hush! She is at the door. Speak softly. You did it admirably! You displayed first-rate talent! But it is all over—I am accepted really, and—"

"Hurrah," shouted his Lordship, waving his night-cap over his head.

Miss Barbican rushed into the room, exclaiming, "Oh, he is worse! What, what was that cry?"

"It is over now, and his Lordship will be better. I have been soothing him, and telling him of your kindness."

"I feel better already," said his Lordship, replacing his night-cap, and settling down again into the bed, "and I should like to have some—"

"Yes—yes," interrupted Wyniates, "his Lordship says he should like to have your kind promise repeated in his presence."

"Was that what you were going to say?" inquired Miss Barbican.

"Not those precise words, he, he, he!"

"The hysterics are coming on again; the excitement is too much!" exclaimed Wyniates; "you had better relieve his mind at once, my dear Miss Barbican."

"My dear uncle," said the young lady thus appealed to, "Mr. Wyniates has already told you that I agree to do as you and he wish. I have deceived neither of you, but stated the sentiments I hold. Having done that, I bow to your wishes and to his."

"You are a good girl, Adeline," cried his Lordship, really affected, "and, by God, I have half a mind to tell you—"

"Calm yourself, my Lord," said Wyniates, alarmed lest Lord Barbican in the warmth of his heart was about to confess the truth.

"Calm yourself. Say no more at present; and do you, my dear Miss Barbican, leave his Lordship till he is somewhat recovered. Now that his mind is relieved, he will, I feel persuaded, be speedily restored to us and to health."

"Heaven grant he may!" exclaimed Miss Barbican, as she once more quitted the room.

When the door had closed, Wyniates told his Lordship the alarm he had been in.

"Egad, you were right. The girl's obedience and sacrifice of her own feelings to us was quite touching. Poor thing! I could not but contrast her innocent and ingenuous conduct and reliance on us with our——how shall I define it?"

"Your Lordship takes too serious a view."

"Perhaps I do! She certainly must be married, and as certainly she seemed to prefer you to the others. But still I cannot help feeling for her: I have brought her up from a child; and women, you know, Wyniates, are not endowed with our masculine strength of mind."

"Very true, my Lord!"

There was a tap at the door, and the servant announced Dr. Pewet.

Wyniates and Lord Barbican looked at one another, and then burst simultaneously into a loud peal of the most unrestrained laughter.

The doctor was a fierce, brisk, round, bustling, buzzing, little fellow, dressed all in brown, exce

violent symptoms, and as sudden recovery. The doctor then requited the narrator with a learned exposition of the human frame in general, and the nervous system in particular. Finally, he accounted for the fortunate circumstance of his having been at home when Lord Barbican's express arrived, by stating that his patient had, though he had been under his care for some months, died in two days after they reached the sea-side.

CHAPTER X.

Leaving the physician to finish his story, and to kill his patient over again, to Lord Barbican, Wyniates hastened to Adeline to communicate the joyful intelligence of the rapid turn in his Lordship's malady, with Dr. Pewet's opinion that he would soon be as well as ever. Miss Barbican was sincerely delighted to hear so favourable an account; but perhaps she would have been yet more so, had it come ere she had given the promise her uncle's illness had extorted. However, she was totally unsuspicious of its having been other than real. Wyniates played the grateful lover, and begged for an early day to be fixed for the completion of his happiness. But when Miss Barbican claimed some little time on ground of the sudden nature of the whole

action, he was altogether not so reluctant as he seemed to be in assenting to a fortnight's delay. It would afford him time for arranging matters with Balderson, with Townley and Walter Wyniates, and with Margaret.

The first of these he felt to be far the most important; and he was well pleased with the diligence of Lord Barbican's steward, by which he was enabled to send off the deeds relating to the promised farm without delay. He sent off also a letter to Balderson, requesting to be informed as speedily as possible should *any change* take place with regard to Mrs. Stacey. He would rather have made another journey to London, and have seen him and Mr. Townley again, but he was unwilling to leave Lord Barbican to conduct his "good smart ideas" and his "little stratagems" alone. He feared lest he would spoil all, and undo the web he had woven.

After the lapse of a few days he received a letter from Balderson, saying "he was disap-
d in the extent of the land that was to be
to him, which, considering the unusual

service required, he thought was not very liberal;" but promising, "if Mr. Wyniates would give him in addition the sum of £500 to stock it with, he would, on receiving a draft on his London banker to that amount, at once send him word that every thing was done as he wished."

Wyniates was exceedingly disgusted at finding himself thus turned round upon by the tool he had employed, and he reflected that even after complying with the demand, he would only be in the same situation as before, as much dependent as ever on Balderson for his fulfilling his part of the contract: if he had not done it on receiving the appointed price, if he had once raised his demand —what security had he that he would do so no more? Still he felt he must rely upon him, and he sent the required draft.

Day after day the post came in, and he heard no more from Balderson. The time for the marriage drew near, and his anxiety increased. At last the expected letter arrived. He feared to open it, lest it should contain, instead of the tidings he desired, a further exaction. He was

relieved by finding that not to be the case. Balderson said "he had delayed writing till he could send word that Mrs. Stacey was no more: she had died but a few hours before he sent his letter, and was to be buried privately on the morrow or the next day." As he read these brief words, which to him spoke so much, he felt himself torn by contending emotions. The first sensation was that of relief—a sense of a danger passed away, a difficulty surmounted: but it was quickly checked by a doubt and suspicion of Balderson, and the thought how he might on his death-bed, if not before, confess the deed, and impeach his employer. Then, too, the image of his betrayed and murdered wife seemed to frown upon him! He thought of her as he had once known her, when she seemed immeasurably above him; when she was so different from the being whose heart he had broken, and whose spirit he had subdued; when she had seemed to concentrate all the pride of her time-honoured race in
tall and queenly form; when she re-
offers of the surrounding gentry and the

less lofty peer. He remembered the benefits she had heaped upon him; how she had raised him from the lowest of the low, the unfathered son of destitution, to be her equal and her lord. How had he repaid these benefits? By the blackest ingratitude, by the most injurious treatment, by the most unheard-of villany!—by insult, by cruelty, by deceit, by tyranny—affliction—death!

However, he endeavoured to ease his conscience by thinking, as he had before argued to Balderson, that the unhappy lady was transferred to a better world; and, reasoning with himself, that at all events what was done was irretrievable, and that, instead of wasting regret on the past, it would be wiser to plan for the future, he strove to drive the thoughts of his guilt from his mind. He therefore wrote to Balderson, thanking him for his faithful services, recommending him to come with his wife into Wales and take possession of his estate; and promising, as soon as he should be aware of his arrival, to call on him and hear all particulars. Having done this, he exerted

himself to the utmost to be cheerful, and was not altogether without success.

His Lordship, too, who had ventured to leave his room the day after he had seen Dr. Pewet, displayed all the buoyant spirits of the convalescent, but which were in reality to be attributed not so much to his having got rid of his slight indisposition, as to his having gained what he wanted by his pretended one. His appetite was more hearty than it had ever been before, and he seemed to think, eat as he might, that he was still in arrear for the time he had lost. He talked to Wyniates about his title, and would not rest content till he had despatched a letter to the prime minister, begging him to obtain his Majesty's promise that, at his decease, the husband of his niece should be created Lord Barbican, and the title be continued to her descendants.

"Whom doth Time gallop withal?" Alas, he has but one pace! The sun is ever at his post; and, though one clock may say he should be here, and another may say he should be there, the unvarying dial will tell that he is where he

ought to be. The Earth spins its daily round; the shadows change sides, lengthen themselves along the ground, and finally are blended into one. The almanac has measured the day and night beforehand; the prediction is verified, yet are not the sons of the Earth crying, "how soon it grows dark! how quick the day has been!" "how the hours have dragged along! Is night put off for ever?"

The day appointed for the marriage approached —with what a different pace to the different inmates of the Castle! To Miss Barbican, whom it would unite for life to a person she felt she could never love, it came on with a quickening speed. For Wyniates it had, though not equal, still too much rapidity: he had twice sent a boy over to the new farm to inquire whether Balderson had arrived, and twice been disappointed. He would fain hear such particulars as by their minuteness should convince him that his wife was really and truly for ever disposed of. On the other hand, he was about to put all rivals out of the question, and to take the first step on that ladder which was to

him to the peerage. Less swiftly to Lord Barbican did the period seem to approach. He would fain have had some positive promise in answer to his application: he received only a vague and evasive excuse that the King was not at that time in London, but that his request should not be lost sight of. Mr. Phlegethon alone was all impatience for the day: he longed to touch the wedding-fee, which he had been calculating on philosophical principles by squaring the wealth of the bridegroom by the lofty expectations of the bride, and to pronounce a blessing on the marriage-feast. To him, therefore, the time seemed stationary.

Hoped or feared, welcome or unwelcome, the morning came. It rained heavily; but, as the ceremony, at the bride's desire, was to be quite private, and to take place in the drawing-room, it would not interfere with that. Mr. Graves's eldest daughter acted as bridesmaid, and the worthy surgeon and some half dozen of the prin-

nts were all, except the household, that

ent on the occasion. The party were all

assembled and waiting for the bride; Mr. Phlegethon arranged his folio book of Common Prayer on a reading-desk which had been brought from the library; Lord Barbican was talking to one of his tenants, and Wyniates chatting to Miss Graves, when a loud ringing was heard at the front door. A footman left the room, and quickly returned, saying a person wanted to speak to Mr. Wyniates.

"Show him into a room," said Lord Barbican, "and tell him Mr. Wyniates is particularly engaged. And do you, my dear Miss Graves, run to Adeline's room and see what she is about."

"She sent me away just now, my Lord," replied Miss Graves, "and promised to follow me as soon as she had composed herself. She was a little agitated."

"Very naturally," said his Lordship. "However, you had better just hasten her a little." Miss Graves left the room—"and Wyniates," continued his Lordship, "upon my soul, you ought not to set off in the rain. Wait and join our early dinner party, and go off after. You will

still get forty or fifty miles on your road, and that is as far as Adeline should travel in one day."

"We shall not mind the weather in a close carriage; and your Lordship knows we have planned our route, sent on horses, and fixed to meet you in London this day week."

"You can manage that all the same, by just leaving out some show-place."

The footman returned into the room, and said the man insisted on seeing Mr. Wyniates; and he added, "he seems a strange sort of person, and if it had not been so early in the day, I should have thought he had been drunk. He said, sir, if you would not come out to speak to him, he must come in and speak to you; but he thought you would see him fast enough when I mentioned his name, Peter Balderson."

"Balderson!" exclaimed Wyniates, starting and turning excessively pale. But he was not the man to let any surprise, however great and sudden, betray itself in his features for many minutes. Mastering his emotion, therefore, he

said to the servant; "show him into the breakfast-room, and say I am coming to him:" and then, turning to Lord Barbican, he continued: "your Lordship knows this is the person for whom I bought the farm. He is a faithful and attached creature, and claims the privilege of old acquaintance. I have always treated him as an equal; and besides, I do not like to detain him, as he is liable to fits and a slight derangemen here," pointing to his head, "if he is put out or agitated. So I will just go and quiet him; and I dare say I shall be back before Miss Barbican appears."

"Ay, go to him by all means, Wyniates. You had better bring him here; he would no doubt like to witness the marriage of his kind-hearted master, his generous benefactor."

To this suggestion Wyniates made no answer, but he had not the slightest intention of adopting it, nor indeed of letting the intruder know what was going on. He found Balderson in the breakfast-room; and the look of his eye, even before he spoke, convinced him that the footman was

right in his conjecture. However, it was the object of Wyniates to get him to go away quietly, and he therefore received him with all the show of kindness in his power. He put out his hand, and inquired how and where he had left Mrs. Balderson.

"How 's yourself, master," replied Balderson, not taking the offered hand. "I 'm come to the wedding, I find. As the old song says,

> 'I 'm come to the wedding,
> Without any bidding,
> And I'll——'"

"Hush, hush!" exclaimed Wyniates, endeavouring to stop him as he roared out the words in what he supposed to be the tune.

"Hush, my good fellow! and so you know of the wedding?"

Balderson, instead of answering this question again broke out into a song:—

> "'Hurrah for the bonnets of blue!
> It is good to be off with the old love,
> Before you are on with the new:'

Ay, master?"

"Oblige me, Balderson, by not making a noise. I am delighted to see you."

"Very, no doubt!"

"I am, indeed, although your visit is a little ill-timed, and your music more so. But what—"

"What ill wind has blown me hither? I know what you meant to say, you see. Well, master, a joke 's a joke."

"Come, Balderson; come, my good fellow—"

"Well, I 'll not keep your bonny bride a-crying for you; though, perhaps, if she knew how you served your first—but that 's neither here nor there. Well, now I just want to ask you a point of law."

"Law?"

"Ay, law! I say, old chap, can they hang folks for—"

"For poisoning? Ay, if 'tis found out; not otherwise. The law would call it murder."

"Poisoning! No, man, for—*Bigamy?*"

"Balderson! Do you mean to tell me you have not done that which your letter told me?"

"Perhaps, now, you think I 'm come to tell you so, and save you from this Bigamy, as they call it?"

"Tell me the truth any way."

"Nay, come, I 'll not frighten you any more. I did it only for sport, like. I 'm gamesomeish with your Barbican Villa ale."

"You have been to my house, then? But first, in one word, is Mrs. Stacey dead?"

"In two words—I swear by my right hand, this marked hand here, you see—she is!"

"Enough, Balderson: I was wrong to doubt you. And so you liked the ale?"

"Well enough. You 'll send me a barrel now and then to the farm—of which I 'm come to say a word."

"You like it, I hope. When did you get there?"

"I 'm come to tell you—but, first, may I ring for a glass of ale? I should like to try if your noble uncle, as is to be, brews like you."

There was a knock at the door, and the same footman that had admitted Balderson had come

to say Miss Barbican was in the drawing-room.

"Wait a moment," said Wyniates; and then, in a low voice to Balderson, "shall I tell him to bring you a jug of ale, and I 'll be back by the time you 've drank it out?"

"No, master, I can't spare you. I must finish my story—"

"Nay, now, Balderson—"

"Upon my soul, if you go, I 'll look in when you won't like it."

"Go to the drawing-room, and say I am coming directly; and heark'ye, Llewellin, bring Mr. Balderson a jug of the best ale."

The servant withdrew. As the man left the room, a thought passed rapidly through the mind of Wyniates, whether it would not be worth hi while to stab the person who showed how well aware he had become of his power, and how he was likely to use it. A carving-knife was at hand on the table where the breakfast things yet remained. But he abandoned the idea as quickly

as he had conceived it; for he well knew, though he might obtain belief when he should state that in a fit of derangement Balderson had suddenly attacked him, and, in defending himself and wresting away the knife, he had accidentally given him the wound, the occurrence would be sure to defer his marriage for a time, and probably for ever, with other consequences that suggested themselves. He therefore endeavoured to obtain his consent to being left for a few minutes.

"Now, Balderson, consider how it will look if I keep the bride waiting."

"Now, consider how the back of my hand looks," replied Balderson in a dogged tone, and exhibiting the scar.

"I thought that was forgotten and forgiven!"

"As to that—never mind. But, however, I will not keep you long. I was going to tell you when I arrived. We came from London all the way post, being three of us—"

"Three! Who was the third?"

"A great friend of my wife's formerly. And we arrived at the Farm yesterday morning very early."

"You were very good to come so soon."

"I did not come, though, because you had asked me to do so, but just to tell you something."

"Yes?"

"That unless you make pretty considerable alterations, I'll be cursed if I live in such a place, that 's all!"

The servant re-entered the room with the ale, which he placed before Balderson, and told Wyniates that Lord Barbican begged he would not stop, but bring his friend to see the ceremony.

"Tell his Lordship he 's a gemman," exclaimed Balderson, filling his glass, "and no mistake. I'll drink his health, and yours, Mr. Wyniates—here 's to you all—and the bride—I must have a look at her—and here 's your good health, Mr. What 's-your-name—Mr. Yellowbelly."

The footman could not help laughing a
epithet his livery had procured, and Wy
seeing no other hope, requested Balderson
the party in the drawing-room.

"But about the farm?"

"Any thing you like. Any alteration sh
made, and you shall be satisfied. Come."

"Very well. Let 's all three have a
together of the John Barleycorn, and the
your man."

Balderson filled the glasses, but the fo
civilly declined.

"Nay, come," said Balderson, holding o
of the glasses, "don't be afraid of Mr. Wy
he was no better than us once;—was yo
hearty? To be sure you 're altered now. Y
got on in the world, somehow or other. Y
been a Prosperous Man!"

Wyniates nodded to the footman to
the liquor, and told him to go and say h
coming.

"And me too," shouted Balderson.

The footman left the room.

"And you, too. Come along, then," and Wyniates put his arm through Balderson's.

His assent to his being present, and the condescension of the last action, so far appeased Balderson, that, satisfied with having displayed the power to have gone if he chose, he told Wyniates he would wait for him there till the ceremony was over.

"But, my dear fellow," said Wyniates, "I must then be off straight. You would not separate man and wife."

"By the holy ceremony, that 's good—from you!"

"Come, Balderson, be content. We shall return here into Wales after a short tour, and then I will see all your wishes attended to about the farm."

"And no mistake?"

"None. Good bye."

"One word, sir. Take my advice; don't marry this Lord's young lady."

"I must now. What 's your objection?"

"Perhaps I may step in and forbid t
banns."

"No, Balderson; no jokes of that kind!"

"Well, just hear this. We got home, a
said, yesterday; and I was so much dis
pointed in the place, that I set off to see y
and I even took the same chaise as had brou
us part of the way. I got to Barbican V
very late, too late to come on to a Lord's ho
that I did not know. So I told them to ge
bed and some supper."

"I am glad you did."

"Ay, and lots of ale to it, and brandy a
water after that. And there I heard you were
be married early this morning. So, though I f
sleepy, and sick, and dizzy, I got up betim
on purpose to give you this very advice."

"'Tis too late; but why? Surely your let
was true?"

"Good Heavens, Wyniates, what means t
delay?" exclaimed Lord Barbican, bursting in
the room. "I can tell you, Adeline will n

wait. I have hardly been able to keep her till now."

"She may happen to wish she had waited longer, if you speak of the bride, my smart old gentleman."

"Excuse him, my Lord. You know what I told you.——This is a friend of mine."

Balderson rose up: "My Lord is it? By all the stars and garters, I never was so near a Lord before. Why, he looks much as other folks."

Wyniates cast on Lord Barbican a deprecating look, and his Lordship took no notice of this sally.

"Good bye, my friend;" and at the word Wyniates again offered his hand.

"Good bye, and—no 'thank-ye; I'm sorish about the hand still."

Taking Lord Barbican's arm, Wyniates smiled, and nodded to his persecutor, and left the room.

"By Heavens! here is Miss Barbican coming away!" exclaimed Wyniates, as they actually met the young lady in the passage. Shame and

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his appearance. It
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door. The rain had

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accompanied them as
room for him for a s

and incumbrance as he was, Wyniates greatly rejoiced that he had not left him to remain in the company of the inquisitive and curious household of the Castle.

A less happy couple seldom started on a similar occasion behind four grays. The perplexity he had so lately been in, doubts of the degree of reliance to be placed on Balderson, the presence of that odious person, who, to show his late master his present equality, kept constantly turning round and making some remark, prevented the bridegroom from appearing cheerful, while the bride had evidently not got over her sense of the slight she had received.

After several miles' travelling, Wyniates took out his watch to calculate as nearly as he could how far they might have proceeded towards the point where they were to be relieved from the intruder. Balderson had turned to inquire the name of a ruin that was visible from the road.

"I say, master, what do they call this o place to the left, yonder?"

"I really don't know. The postboy can tell you, perhaps."

"And, perhaps the postboy can tell me what o'clock it is! But I prefer asking you."

"Half-past ten."

"And no mistake?"

"Look," said Wyniates, holding up the watch.

The bride, who had been silent for some time, whispered, "How can you put up with such rudeness? Set the fellow down in the road; he annoys me."

Wyniates put his head near her to catch the words; and Balderson, on whose brain the whirl of the rapid wheels had combined with the last night's brandy and the morning's ale, and who was more full of mischief than capable of equilibrium, in endeavouring to seize the opportunity of his master being turned from him to snatch the watch, leaned over the side of the box, lost his balance, and fell. The carriage rose and sunk with a slight heave.

The bride shrieked.

"Thank God, if it is but his neck!" exclaimed Wyniates in a loud and triumphant tone.

The bride looked at him in amazement. The screams of the woman on the box, and the loud call of the valet, succeeded in stopping the galloping postboys. One of them accompanied the valet back to where the fallen villain lay at his length on the ground.

Wyniates got out of the carriage and went towards them, and inquired whether he was killed.

"He breathes," said the postboy; "but I don't know whether he will breathe long in this world. He 's quite unsensible."

"Can you see where he is hurt, my man?"

"Not exactly, sir. The wheel went over his chest. If it had gone a little higher or a little lower, he 'd ha' been a crops by this."

"I wish it had!" muttered Wyniates, and then he added aloud, "How should we be proceed with him? Boy, is there any c near?"

The bride gave him a look, which, had it been interpreted into words, would have said, "Do I hear aright, or did I hear wrong when you said you wished his neck had been broken?" However, all the words she gave utterance to were, "What do you propose doing then?"

"Why, will you be so kind as to go on with the servants, and Titterton can come back with a chaise for him and me; he need not be half an hour. I will stay with this poor man till he comes."

"I think my plan would be best, indeed."

"No, I assure you. I will give you a satisfactory reason by and bye. In short, to tell you now, the man is subject to peculiar fits, which this is likely to bring on, and I am used to them. You had better let it be so."

Much surprised at her husband's conduct, which appeared most capriciously and inexplicably contradictory, the bride, nevertheless, was obliged to give way to the last argumer and, all agreeing no time was to be lost, again got into the carriage, the valet a



" Now for a
Shall the wretch
Not long!"

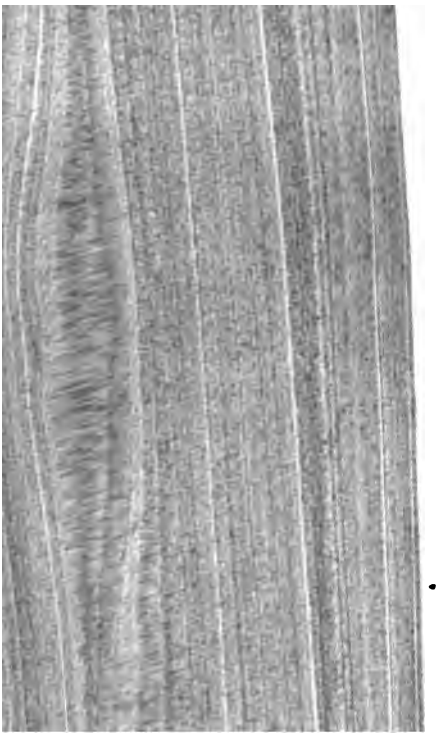
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a clasp-knife, a pencil, a purse, a pocket-book, a note-case, a small packet, and some loose papers. The packet was labelled, "For Mrs. Balderson—on my death." The purse contained a provincial note, eight sovereigns, and some silver. "As it is all my own, I 'll make free—yet no, I 'll only take five of the sovereigns—the note might be traced. So, then, I 'll put back this knife—and the purse—and the pencil—and some of these loose papers. Let me see, this—and this—and the rest I will look over at my leisure."

Wyniates put the selected articles into his own pocket, and paced up and down the road; but, the carriage not appearing, his curiosity became so excited that he could not resist again drawing them forth. In the note-case he found a banker's receipt for £400, and some notes, which he immediately recognised as having once been his own. So cautious was he, that, though he had just been taking the trifling sum of five sovereigns, he would not run the risk of



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Stacey was mentioned, Mrs. Wyniates was meant; and especially there was, enclosed in a separate cover, the one about the Welsh farm; and, lastly, there was a letter endorsed "for Mrs. Gordon Wyniates, if she ever recovers," which had been written, as both the date and the worn state of the paper proved, a long time before, and soon after she had been put under his keeping. This, therefore, though it had startled Wyniates at first, as intimating that the party addressed was still alive, he found amounted to nothing.

The insolence of the man that very day, and the disposition he had shown to abuse his ill-acquired power over him, had made the murderous act he had performed an easy and a grateful one to Wyniates; but, the prize he had now secured, and the discovery it had led him to of further intended persecution aud future treachery, gave it in his eyes an additional triumph; and, as he turned towards the hated corpse, he could scarce refrain from assaulting it anew.

At length the chaise appeared; it drew up, and Titterton was by his master's side.

"How is Mr. Balderson, sir?"

"Quite dead. He expired not long after you were gone, and I should have walked on but that I did not like to leave the body alone."

They placed the body inside the chaise, and Wyniates mounted the driving-seat beside his servant.

On reaching the inn, he lost no time in hastening on their journey, leaving Titterton to give evidence, should there be any inquiry, as to the accidental nature of the occurrence, and to superintend the funeral, himself undertaking to let Mrs. Balderson know by degrees of her widowed state. He directed the pockets of the deceased to be searched, and took charge of the contents, expressing surprise and gratification at finding there was so much property about him to be forwarded to his wife. Having made these arrangements and seen fresh horses, of which he had himself sent on a pair from his own stud

the day before, (for experience had taught him the chance he would otherwise stand of being delayed,) put to, the newly-married pair were once more on the road.

What a tour for a bride! Always averse to the marriage, it would have required a concurrence of the most cheering circumstances, a sunny day, the brightly beaming countenances of friends, the pomp and circumstance of dress, and festivity, and a crowded assemblage, to have kept up her spirits. But clouds and rain, interruption and delay, the absence of her equals, had conspired to make her look upon the step she was taking in a gloomy light; and the frightful accident, now so fatally concluded, and which at the time had been accompanied by the exclamation that, coming as it did from one who had appeared as the indulgent master and the kind friend, had so much astonished her, all added to her previous dejection. She thought of her uncle, who had been the father and protector of her youth; and the tears rolled in large drops

down her cheeks. Wyniates strove to say something soothing, told her she would soon forget the horrible catastrophe, and promised that no attention on his part should be wanting to render her a happy bride.

CHAPTER XI.

ARRIVING in London from their brief tour, they drove straight to the house where Lord Barbican always lodged, and there they found him established and looking for their coming. He had heard of their disagreeable adventure on leaving the Castle, and did not wonder at its having so severely shocked his niece, but still he was far from expecting to see so great and rapid a change as her faded and care-worn countenance exhibited.

"We will call on the prime minister in the morning, Wyniates," said his Lordship. "You must be with me to back me, and to be a witness of all he says. By what I can learn, he is not just now in a position to spare one vote in the Upper House, and three in the Commons; and, as

as God made Moses, I 'll go into opposition if he attempts to put me off."

" You are quite right. A private friend, an ally in public life, surely, has some claim, considering the rewards now distributing."

" But, my Lord," said Mrs. Wyniates, " would you really oppose ministers because of your own individual pique or grievance, if their measures were beneficial to the country ?"

" Each for himself, and God for us all, as the donkey said when he kicked his heels about in the poultry-yard. I tell you what, Adeline—find me the patriot now-a-days that entirely neglects himself. I 'd rather, no doubt, vote with ministers and support the aristocracy ; but I 've a right to be considered, too. I am part of the country."

" And no small part," said Wyniates.

" No small part, as you say ; and, besides, I do not ask a new creation. I merely beg to have a title already existing, and which has long existed, preserved—and, as I 've said, I will have it—or I 'll turn Whig, that 's all."

To the minister therefore Wyniates promised to accompany his Lordship at the earliest orthodox hour on the following morning. But, long before that time, he had been to Valentine's Hotel and seen his son. He directed that the child should be kept there for a few days longer, till he could make arrangements for his future disposal; and he further gave orders that he should be brought to Lord Barbican's lodgings at a certain hour, as his wife had expressed a wish to see her step-son.

At the appointed time Lord Barbican and Wyniates drove to the house of the prime minister. They were conducted into a small inner drawing-room. After waiting about a quarter of an hour, during which Lord Barbican planned the speech he intended to deliver, and Wyniates examined the bust of the owner of the mansion, the original of the bust appeared. He was a tall man, remarkable only for the singular length of his neck, and the upward turn of his nose. His countenance bespoke energy, and his address was courteous in the extreme. Lord Barbican pre-

sented his nephew, and began the premedit
harangue. He was interrupted by a request, c
vered in the most polite tone, "that he w
omit all argument, his claims being unquest
able, and state precisely the nature of the arra
ment he wished to be made."

"I wish, you see, Sir, to have my title sa
from extinction."

"Exactly, my dear Lord; and it is limited
I well recollect, in the very ancient patent, to
heirs male—"

"Not so—to the heirs of my body. I
I shall never marry again, and my wife
childless."

"Just so. She was an amiable lady; I k
her when she was the Honourable Miss D
motte."

"Indeed? I never recollect to have heard
speak of you."

"Perhaps not. I was quite a boy."

"Now I have a niece, who will inherit
estates, which will maintain a peerage, I fi
myself."

"Indeed they will!"

"This gentleman has married her lately—only a week."

"I wish you joy, my dear Sir," said the minister, shaking Wyniates by the hand. His Lordship continued:

"He therefore will have those estates, in addition to his own, which are very large; and he will have, of course, my three boroughs. Now, the extent of the favour I have to beg of you is, that at my decease—"

"Which I hope is far off."

"So do I, but when it does come, I want him to be created Lord Barbican, with remainder to my niece's children, lawfully born."

The minister smiled at the last qualification, and said, "it should be done, provided he remained in office; but he hoped his Lordship's life was not limited to that span."

"Ay, there it is! You see if I survive your going out of office (which *may* be the case) your successor may refuse to ratify your promise. Now, could not you get His Majesty to give me

like that; and, besides, it would be quite new."

"It would, indeed, and I should never have dreamt of such a thing. No.—I propose for your Lordship to take some higher title, and Mr.——"

"Wyniates."

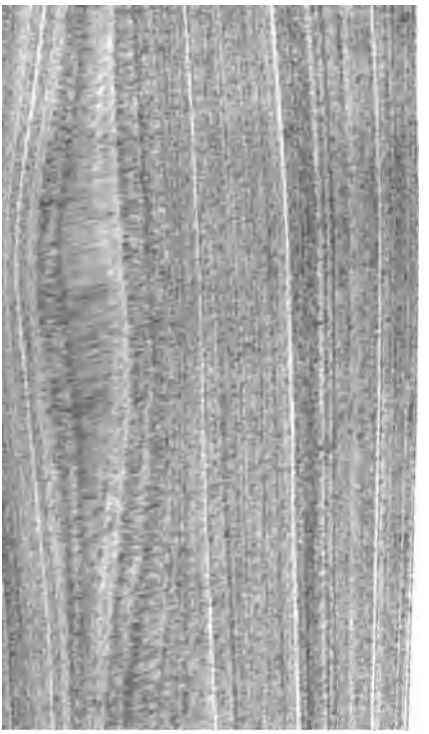
"—Mr. Wyniates to be created at once. We make so many peerages for services of trifling import, that I cannot think his Majesty, my most gracious master, will refuse a favour to me in behalf of one through whose valuable influence I set those services in motion."

"You speak very obligingly—and my acknowledgements—"

"Spare them, my dear Lord. They should not be all on one side. Rely on it this shall be done without delay, unless, which I do not anticipate, the King objects to a new creation—"

"This is hardly so. The title exists—"

"Yes, but—the earldom for yourself. Have you thought of a title—your county—"



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but Wyniates

"Why, he did certainly appear very friendly! The recollection of the antiquity of my title; the reminiscence of my wife—"

"Were all moonshine, take my word for it. I should not wonder if he never saw her; and, as for the other, your Lordship's recent letter reminded him of that. No, no: your Lordship's title might have been older than the Emperor of China's, and your lady his sister, but deuce a bit would you have been nearer an earldom, or I a barony, for either one or the other! Still, as the double creation was his own idea, I take it for a proof of the sincerity of his intentions; and, when I consider the motives that may be supposed to have influenced him, I feel quite satisfied as to the result. You see, my Lord, without cheapening the peerage by an undue influx, and by merely giving you a higher title for your life, and preserving your present one through me, he secures two votes in the Lords' and three in the Lower House, all of which, save mine, might be turned against him; and more, too—for, with your

and the other articles which he had not appropriated to himself.

Nor did he omit to make arrangements for the care of his son. He dismissed the foreign nurse, who, with her husband, had hitherto had charge of him, and sent them back into their own country liberally paid. He then called upon Margaret Brownsword, and informed her of his intention to let the child be entirely under her keeping till he should be old enough to be sent to school, or placed under a tutor; but he made it a condition that she should pass under a new name and remove from her present lodgings; and he placed her in a small house in the suburbs of London, ready furnished. He said this was only a temporary measure, as he intended, on his return to Wales, to establish her in a cottage a few miles from his residence, where he could frequently see the boy, which he should prefer to having him under his own roof and the eye of a new step-mother. Poor Margaret acquiesced in these arrangements, not only with patience and obedience, but even thankfulness. She had long

given up all hope of Wyniates fulfilling his p
mise to her, and the knowledge that he had ag
put it out of his power afflicted her not. S
had bowed her humble spirit to her lot, and w
content to have her boy restored to her arm
Occupied with these affairs, Wyniates necessar
was not in close attendance on his bride; but h
company was not regretted; she had the mo
welcome arm of her beloved uncle, for whom s
had made the sacrifice, and in the genuine spir
of a generous and a grateful mind she took ca
to hide from him the real extent of it.

The day for dining at the minister's arrive
and Lord Barbican was so agitated that he cou
scarcely go through the requisite preparation
All but minds of the first order as to strength a
resolution fail when a long-deferred trial, or
far-anticipated and important moment havi
drawn slowly but surely on, is at hand.
Wyniates, though a proud and desired prize w
on the point of being decided, the event wroug
no sign of emotion. He felt he was about
succeed; and he felt, too, that if he did no

there were resources in his own mind that would bring him back to the charge.

As, having alighted from their carriage, they left their hats in the entrance-hall, a powdered footman inquired their names.

"Lord Barbican and Mr. Wyniates."

The man preceded them up-stairs, threw open the door of the same spacious drawing-room as they had once before passed through, and, as they stepped into a room filled with noble and distinguished guests, he announced "The Earl of Gotham and Lord Barbican!"

If even Wyniates started at the sound, the agitation of Lord Barbican, in the present excited state of his nerves, may be imagined. He threw himself upon a chair.

The host hastened up to him, and, taking his hand, "begged ten million pardons for what he intended should have been an agreeable surprise, but which he was now sorry he had ventured on."

The newly-created Earl, however, soon recovered, and he and his companion received the

congratulations o
of whom were
Earl.

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names, and, as
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host's colleagues
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achieved, they ret

Lord Barbican took an early opportunity of visiting Mrs. Balderson at the farm. He found she had got over the trifling regret she had felt at her husband's death. His treatment had been such that his loss was rather a relief than otherwise. Lord Barbican, anxious to be set at rest as to the fact of his wife's having died at the precise time stated in Balderson's letter, and to ascertain whether she had any suspicion of foul play, requested Mrs. Balderson "to give him the full particulars of Mrs. Stacey's decease."

"Decease! Lord bless ye, Sir!" (Mrs. Balderson knew not she was speaking to a peer) "the poor lady is not dead. It would be a great mercy if she were!"

"Not dead! Why your husband wrote me word she had died in London."

"Indeed, Sir? I'm sorry to say he had but little respect to truth! But I did not know he had written that. He said he should, but I 'm sure I did not believe him."

"He did say he should?"

"Yes, Sir; he told me you had promised us

this house whenever she died, and he said we might as well have it, and he should say she was dead. I assure you I begged him not, and I thought I 'd succeeded: but he was a positive phrenzy man, Sir."

"And he did not like the place after all?"

"Lord bless ye, Sir! he stormed like mad when he got here: we 'd been hindered on the road; for the poor mistress, Sir, was taken with one of her fits, and so we had to pass another night at an inn—we 'd sad work with her. And so we got here before the middle of the next day; and when Balderson saw the house, he cursed and swore, and said it was only a farm-house, and not a villa, like the places out of London, as he 'd expected; and he would not live in such an old tumble-down spot—not he. (But it 's a comfortable good house, I 'm sure, Sir; more than good enough for the like of us!) And he just let the man bait his horses, and then off he set for Barbican Villa to see you, Sir, and that was the last I saw of him; poor man!—he was a bold bad man, but it was a sad sudden death, and he

was my husband, though I married him mainly to please you—"

"Well, but Mrs. Stacey —?"

"Ay, Sir, she 's up stairs: she has never left her room since the day but one after we got here. She is not long for this world—her health is breaking quickly—she has sunk ever since that medicine she took in London, which did not suit her—it always seemed to go against her—she is drooping away—going, Sir—quite melting away, like butter in the sun."

"Do you think she would know me if I were to go up to her?"

"You 'd better not, for fear she should. The last time she heard your voice, the day you and Balderson had words, Sir, it made her very bad; it brought on fit after fit, and for some days I expected her to go, poor soul!"

"I should like to see her, though."

"Well, Sir, your honour must have your own way, but I 'd advise you not. My opinion is, it would kill her—she is all but at the last as it is."

"I should like to see her. By-the-bye, Mrs. Balderson, does any one know she is here? Has she been seen?"

"Only one or two poor people have seen her, Sir; nobody of consequence. Indeed we've seen none such at the house, and, as I said, the mistress has kept to it."

"Show me the room, if you please."

"Well, Sir, if I must—but it would have been better not."

Mrs. Balderson led the way up-stairs, opened a door carefully, and closed it after them. In a room, furnished and arranged with the utmost care and neatness, and an unusual degree of comfort for a farm-house, but still very different from the ancient splendour of Wyniates Hall, lay the injured lady. She slept; but it was a troubled, dreamy sleep, and words escaped her lips which would not have been uttered by her had she been a conscious being. More than once were repeated the words "Ferraby Brook," "Coryton," and "Sir Cecil." The hardened heart of the villain who had made that ruined lady the wreck she

was, was shaken. He withdrew to the door. At that instant the sleeper awoke. She saw the form of her husband. She started up in her bed —fixed her eye wildly on the apparition—uttered a cry which seemed to carry her frantic soul forth with it, so wild, so piercing, so shrill was it—and then slowly fell back on her pillow. Wyniates tore open the door and rushed down stairs.

He stopped not till he had got outside the house, when, recovering his self-possession, he returned to the chair he had occupied whilst conversing with Mrs. Balderson. That cry rung in his brain, and he felt stupified and incapable of thought. At length he was roused by a voice calling his name—his late name, in a loud whisper from the top of the stairs.

"Mr. Wyniates—Sir—Mr. Wyniates, come up—the poor lady is gone."

He obeyed, and, as he entered the room, she proceeded:

"That cry was her last — she knew you, Sir— poor, poor, poor lady!"

The woman sunk sobbing on the bed, and

Lord Barbican, taking the hand of his wife, was convinced he touched a corpse. The clammy dew of death was there.

He desired Mrs. Balderson to order a coffin, and say the deceased was a near relation of her own; and he promised to return on the third day, and accompany her with it to the nearest churchyard.

This he did not neglect to do, and all passed over quietly, and without inquiry. His person was yet unknown to the curate, and the few villagers whom Mrs. Balderson had procured to bear the coffin were nearly all that attended the ceremony. He believed it unlikely that Mrs. Balderson would ever become acquainted with the fact of his second marriage, so secluded was the spot she inhabited; and even, if in time it should reach her ears, it would probably be so long after the present event, that she would not be likely to inquire the date for the purpose of learning which of the two had first occurred; and lastly, he was still secure, supposing she should become aware of the truth, that her

respect for her husband's memory, who she must well know had assured Mr. Wyniates of his wife's decease by letter, would bind her to inviolable secrecy.

But never after that piercing death-bed shriek did a smile settle on the lip of the murderous Lord. Slept he or woke—it rung ever, ever in his ear. He had attained the summit of his ambitious pride. He was a peer. He was wealthy: he had before him the prospect of yet greater wealth at the death of the Earl. For once a person stood in his way—and lived! Not that the familiar idea of removing the impediment did not occur to him—but he felt at last that he had committed crimes more than enough; and, in truth, the Earl acted so entirely under his advice and controul, that, except in name, all his possessions were nearly as much his as they would ever be. He disposed of every thing of importance, arranged every thing, commanded every thing. Though he was in his heart miserable, to the world he seemed A PROSPEROUS MAN!

Years went by, an heir was born to his title,

and sons and daughters besides. In this respect, as in misery, he was like the unhappy husband of Parisina:

> "And Azo found another bride,
> And other sons grew by his side;
> But * * on his cold eye
> Their growth was glanced unheeded by,
> Or noticed with a smother'd sigh.
> But never tear his cheek descended,
> And never smile his brow unbended."

The Earl of Gotham having lived some years to see a sure prospect of his former and more beloved title of Barbican being safely carried down to posterity, died so far content, but not unconscious of his niece's unhappiness.

In addition to the cares of a guilty conscience, Lord Barbican suffered much annoyance from his eldest son, the son of Margaret, the supposed son of Augusta Wyniates. His kind-hearted but uneducated mother had done all she could to spoil the boy while he was under her controul; but from that he early emancipated himself, led on

by his froward temper, and the knowledge that he was born independent. When he had attained the age of nine years, his father made an arrangement for placing him under a tutor, without removing him from his mother. For this office he selected Mr. Phlegethon, induced by the sternness of his disposition, which he thought would be able to check the perverse boy. He gave him a living on condition of his marrying Margaret. She was very reluctant to obey Lord Barbican in this instance, nor could his argument —that it would settle her in a respectable and recognised station in society, influence her to consent. But she finally yielded to the threat that her boy, whom, notwithstanding his faults, she idolized, should be for ever taken from her. Mr. Phlegethon, to whom Margaret's yet unfading beauty recommended her, had no objection either to her or to the living. He knew not her origin, nor her previous history; and fully believed the tale which his new patron told him of her being an orphan who had been brought up by his first wife. He felt also flattered by being intrusted

with the charge of rearing the heir to the wide possessions of the Wyniates'. They were married accordingly. But the tutor was no match for the pupil. He despised his doctrine, laughed at his logic, and was not amended by his chastisement. He had tied three crackers to his preceptor's pigtail before he had conjugated two verbs; he mixed the vinegar with the white wine more aptly than he joined adjectives to substantives; and the only conjunction he employed with pleasure was cobler's wax between the rusty black breeches and the leather cushion of his master's chair. These annoyances, though they greatly afflicted the renowned author of the Logical and Mathematical Estimate, were trifling to what he afterwards endured. Mischief grew with the boy's growth; it appeared inherent in his disposition. Mr. Phlegethon was at length obliged to recommend that he should be sent to a public school. He remained at one till he attained the age of fifteen, and was then expelled. Lord Barbican, finding that nothing could be done with him, was compelled to keep him under his own eye at the

Castle till such period as he could send him to the University. At home he almost ran wild. The farmers and the tenants feared him, the servants hated him; to his half-brothers and sisters he was tyrannical and overbearing; to his mother-in-law rude and insolent; and to his father disobedient. He "repaid him with too like a son."

It is true, he was not yet like him in act and deed; but in disposition and in personal appearance he was his very image: any one who knew either would, on seeing the other, have at once recognised the relationship.

It was this likeness that led to a singular discovery. He had at length been for his two first terms at the University, and had returned to Gotham Castle for the long vacation. Lord Barbican's other sons were at home also from their respective schools, and the eldest, the Honourable William Wyniates, from his private tutor's. He was now not quite seventeen, being about two years younger than John Wyniates; a quick,

intelligent youth, with a very mitigated portion of his father's ill qualities. Between him and John Wyniates there was a good deal of ill blood, owing to the latter's rough treatment of himself and his own brothers and little sisters.

Young John Wyniates would make no scruple of ordering Master Griffiths Wyniates to go and find his valet, or Miss Adeline to fetch his slippers. Such imperious behaviour was intolerably offensive to the high-spirited William, and many had been the hot debates that had passed between them.

One of the favourite pastimes of John Wyniates was fishing, and he was in the habit of absenting himself for days together, equipped with his rod and his basket slung over his shoulder, exploring the haunts of the trout in the more secluded recesses of the Welsh mountain-streams.

On one occasion he had been absent for three or four days, when Lord Barbican happening to look down the sloping hill of the Park saw him at the bottom of it, seated on the ground. At the same minute his son William rode by. It had

been Lord Barbican's endeavour to promote union between the brothers, though he was aware he had but ill succeeded. He threw open the window, and called out to his son:

"William, do you see your brother down below the hill there?"

"Yes; if that 's he, I do see him."

"He is sitting down, you see, before he mounts the hill. I dare say he is tired."

"I dare say he is. 'Tis a beautiful day, and I 've had a fine ride."

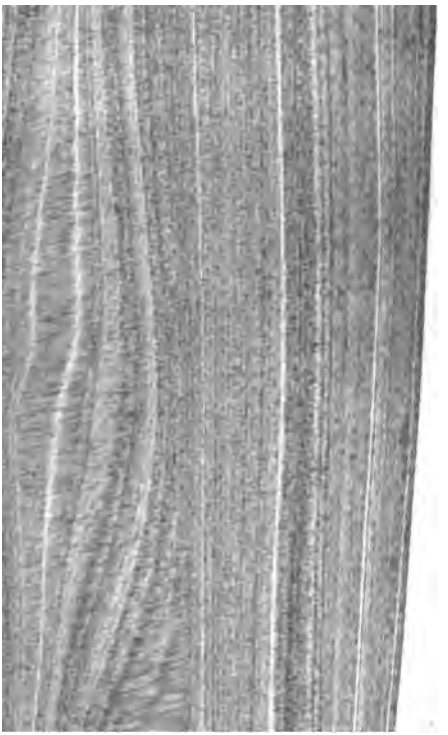
"Suppose you trot down, lend him your horse, and carry his basket. He would take it kindly."

"Not he, my Lord. He 'd very likely bid me ride back and be damned."

"No, no, William; I should think not. However, do it to oblige me."

"I will."

And the young man trotted down the hill. Lord Barbican watched him; but, instead of dismounting, he saw him, after a short parley, ride up the hill again at full speed. Lord Barbican threw open the window to speak, but William



yard.

His Lords
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simultaneous, startled him, and at the same moment a bullet whizzed close to his ear. The horse which had been hung to the paling sprung back violently, broke his rein, and galloped towards the stable. Lord Barbican rushed forwards, clambered over the rails, and beheld his son William leaning against a tree, bleeding from the arm, with a pistol at his feet, and Wyniates with one still in his hand. He ran up and caught his wounded boy in his arms.

Short but furious was the altercation between Wyniates and his incensed father. The latter told him to prepare to quit the Castle, and, as soon as he was ready to depart, to see him in his private room for the last time in this world. The youth replied that it was a command which he should obey with particular pleasure. Lord Barbican led his other son, leaning on his arm, up the hill. The wound turned out not to be very serious, the ball having passed through the fleshy part of the right arm near the shoulder. Mr. Graves was quickly summoned to dress the wound, and he pronounced that his patient would

not be required to we
month.

Wyniates was not lo
departure; and, after
an hour with his fathe
never to return; but wh
that always seemed to h
had taken a darker hue.

Many, in after year
transactions in which
appeared before the p
letters which Lord Barb
money, at one time a la
a permanent increase
these he appeared to
comply.

At length the perpet
passed his days began
strong frame; his hair
gray, his step feeble,
became nervous and irrit
shut himself in his lon
broad terrace in the fron

himself, and frequently giving sudden starts without apparent reason. His iron soul was bent; the destroyer had gained an inroad; his health declined with visible rapidity; and yet, save his eldest son, no one knew the cause of the care that consumed him. To the world, who saw only the one annoyance of that spendthrift and ungracious youth, and who thought, that, since all must have their sufferings, his was a smaller share than common, and his blessings more, he still appeared a Prosperous Man.

At last the hand of death was on him. He summoned his son William to his bed-side; gave him the key of his writing-desk, that same Bramah key which he had always worn suspended round his neck; and bade him open it in three months after his death. He told him he would find a packet addressed to himself. At the same time he delivered a letter for Mr. and Mrs. Phlegethon, which he said contained a sum of money for the latter, and was to be forwarded at his decease. He then ordered his son to withdraw, and see that no one entered his room for six hours; and that Dr. Pewet, Mr. Graves, and

the clergyman, whom he had declined seeing, should be paid off and requested to go home. His son obeyed.

At the appointed time he returned to the room. His father was quite dead. An empty phial, labelled laudanum, lay by his pillow. He had taken it to abridge sufferings, which in an hour or two more must have closed his career, and to drown thoughts that he dared not and could not endure. William Wyniates cast the bottle into the fire.

To Lady Barbican his death was a release. She had latterly passed her time as much out of his sight as possible, in her nursery, or taking her favourite recreation of riding out with her elder children. Few, if any, regretted the departed Lord: but not the less was there the mocking pageant of a pompous funeral, and the purchased sorrow of the hearse. Nor in due time did a marble monument fail to grace the family burying-place, enriched with the arms of Wyniates and Barbican; nor was there an inscription wanting whereby they who choose to

'Believe a woman, or an epitaph,'

might learn how well he had borne his "blushing honours." It was from the classic and grateful pen of Mr. Phlegethon, whom the last liberal letter from his lamented Lord had powerfully affected, as it contained a £1000 note for his wife. It was as follows:—

BENEATH REPOSE THE ASHES
OF THE RIGHT HONORABLE JOHN GORDON WYNIATES
BARON BARBICAN OF GOTHAM
HE MARRIED FOR HIS FIRST WIFE AUGUSTA
DAUGHTER AND SOLE HEIRESS OF JOHN WYNIATES
OF WYNIATES HALL IN THE PARISH OF CORYTON ESQ.
BY WHOM HE HAD ISSUE ONE SON
AND FOR HIS SECOND WIFE ADELINE
DAUGHTER AND HEIRESS OF WILLIAM EARL OF GOTHAM
AND BARON BARBICAN OF GOTHAM CASTLE
BY WHOM HE HAD ISSUE 3 SONS AND 2 DAUGHTERS
HE DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON THE 29TH DAY OF NOVEMBER
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 18—
ESTEEMED AND REGRETTED
OF ANCIENT AND HONORABLE DESCENT
AN ORNAMENT TO THE PEERAGE
A MUNIFICENT PATRON OF LEARNING
AND THE LEARNED
HE LEFT BEHIND HIM THE CHARACTER
OF A NOBLEMAN TRULY NOBLE
AND OF AN UPRIGHT JUST HONEST AND
PROSPEROUS MAN.

CHAPTER XII.

THE appointed three months having expired, William, now Lord Barbican, full of impatient curiosity, hastened to open the packet his father had bequeathed to his care. He found it dated several months prior to his death, and addressed to himself in the form of a long letter :—

"MY DEAR SON,

"I sit down to a painful and degrading task, which will for ever render my memory odious and contemptible in your eyes, but which I am compelled to perform by the threats of your unnatural brother-in-law.

"In the last interview that I ever had with him, he gave me an account of his quarrel with you, of which you will know at once the truth or

falsehood. He told me he was exceedingly tired with a very long walk, when you rode up to him, and mentioned to him, that I had directed you to offer him your horse. He said he was offended at your manner, and the care you took to show him that the attention did not originate with yourself: on this words arose, and he applied to you and to your mother an epithet of the coarsest kind. As I told you at the time, that epithet, whatever the law may say, is morally untrue. He assured me that it was wrung from him by anger, as, though he had intended at some time or other to let me know he had become aware of circumstances which I am about fully to detail, he had not intended ever to make any stir about them during my life. On inquiring how he had become aware of them at all, he gave me the following account. In his fishing ramble he chanced to stop at a little way-side public-house for such refreshment as the place afforded, and he made inquiry of the old landlord respecting the different streams. The man recommended him to try one which ran by Mrs. Balderson's farm-house, and through

the land which used to be the late Lord Barbican's. The name of Balderson was not altogether unfamiliar to his ears, as he had, it seems, heard Mrs. Phlegethon, his tutor's wife, speak of him as having been many years in my service, and with me at Geneva, where he himself had passed his infancy. He had heard also of his sudden death, which had happened the day after his coming to this very house, and on the morning of my marriage with your mother. These circumstances were enough to excite in him a curiosity to see the place; and little dreaming that it would lead to any result, he resolved to fish his way up the stream, and call at the farm-house. He did so, and before he opened his lips, it appears, Mrs. Balderson knew him from his likeness to myself. He at once declared she was right, and they got into conversation. From her he learnt the circumstance that his mother, whom he had always believed to have died in London, died at that very place, and the date at once proved it to have been subsequent to my marriage with your mother—of which his

informant had not been aware, and which I grieve to admit is the truth. From this he led her on to tell him the whole story of her having been removed to a place of confinement at the time when it was given out that she had died at Valentine's Hotel.

"Although William, when you read this, I shall be gone to account for these deeds, my ear even now anticipates the exclamation of grief and anger with which you will here assail me. But I have set myself the task—and I never failed to do what I designed. I proceed.

"Thus much he learned from his singular and accidental meeting with Mrs. Balderson. After that, came your quarrel—your natural anger to vindicate your mother's name, and your too hasty resort to that deadly method of doing so. You know that I then banished him the Castle. But you do not know the vindictive steps he has taken, nor the nature of the letters I received. They were full of insult—alas! and of truth, and of threat. He has taken means of recording

before witnesses the statement of Mrs. Balderson, and he has confirmed it by pursuing a like course with the landlord of Valentine's Hotel. Nor had he omitted to inquire for people who had lived in the neighbourhood of Balderson, and who could describe the personal appearance of the reputed Mrs. Stacey. In short, there cannot be a doubt that he would be able to prove, that, my first wife having been alive at the time, my marriage with your injured mother was invalid, and that she and you are, legally speaking, actually what he so grossly called you.

"Regrets will not undo the past, nor apologies atone for it. I give you a better assurance against this young man's threatened disclosures, by putting you on an equality with him, and enabling you to dare him to indulge his hatred and revenge at the expense of an exposure, and loss of a similar kind on his own part. This I warned him I should do; but he received the intimation with incredulity, defiance, and the taunt that I dare not confess the full amount

of my villany,—I dare not throw in another shade to the already unparalleled blackness of my deep-dyed character.

"His reproaches, his insults, will not affect me at the time that you read this; and when I give you an assurance that will come from the grave, that not out of vengeance towards him, but out of a wish to make all the atonement in my power to you and my other children, I make the following disclosure, you will perhaps be led to know a feeling almost approaching to pity and forgiveness of your guilty parent.

"John Wyniates, then, is no more legitimate than yourself! Nay, he is even less so, if there be degrees; for between his mother and me the church at no time breathed her hallowed sanction. His mother was a villager at Coryton—her name Margaret Brownsword; she now lives, and is—I see your surprise—the wife of the Rev. A. Phlegethon. By Mrs. Wyniates I never had any family.

"The following persons will enable you, if necessary, to establish the above facts; but I take

this opportunity of requesting, that, if possible, these fatal disclosures may be avoided: as I have before said, I arm you for the defensive; and I leave a father's heavy curse on the party that begins the war. Margaret Phlegethon will confess that Wyniates is her son, and she will furnish you with the date and place of his birth, and relate how she was induced to give him up afterwards to me.

"Mr. Townley of Beech House will be able to confirm her as to the age of the infant before my marriage with Miss Wyniates.

"Antoine Dessanges, and his wife Marie, of Geneva, will prove their receiving a child to bring up of an age which would carry its birth considerably before the date of my marriage with Miss Wyniates.

"M. Snacks, the Swiss Protestant minister, will state the same as to the child's age when it was christened after my name.

"The Rev. Mr. Eattenhop, and Mr. and Mrs. Townley, can fix the date of my first marriage.

"These parties can establish more than enough to throw John Wyniates back upon poverty, mean origin, and disgrace. I trust it may not be required. I would fain save even him from ruin; but still more anxious am I to save your injured mother, yourself, your brothers and sisters—ay, and poor Margaret too, from shame and pain.

"William, adieu! There are yet further and deeper crimes than these on this devoted soul. But the disclosure of them could advantage you nothing, and without an object there is no cause why I should further forestall the shame of the final day. Once more, adieu!

Your unhappy father,

BARBICAN."

With a long-drawn sigh, the first he had ever breathed, the young man closed the fatal packet. He restored it to the desk, and placing the chain which secured the key round his neck, as his father had been wont to wear it, he sat with his eye fixed and his hand clenched, musing on the disgraceful tale. He meditated within himself

whether he should confide the whole to his mother, but finally decided on burying it in his own bosom. Why should he distress one whom he could not relieve?

But she was doomed to bear that distress. The precaution of the departed Lord was vain. John Wyniates had not pursued his investigation in London so secretly, that the people who had lived near the Baldersons did not get an idea of who their inmate had been. The thing began to be talked about, and, in time, the knowledge reached Barbican Castle that unpleasant reports were in circulation. The young Lord wrote to Wyniates, charging him with having set them afloat, and hinting at the possibility of their being retorted. An insolent answer was returned, saying they should be spread yet more. A correspondence ensued, passions were roused, and Wyniates, losing sight of prudence and self-interest, defied his brother-in-law to reflect upon him any portion of the disgrace he was himself about to suffer. Lord Barbican, upon this, applied to Mr. Townley to communicate with

Walter Wyniates; and the exile lost no time in returning from Canada to assert his claim.

It was established: and so also was the invalidity of Lady Barbican's marriage. After the first shock of shame, she was consoled by knowing, that, though her title was gone, she was uncontrolled mistress of the Castle and the large estates attached to it, and could bequeath them to her children; and she rejoiced to think that her beloved uncle had died undeceived as to the duration of those honours he had prized so highly.

Mr. Phlegethon was annoyed at the trick which had been played upon him; but the amiable temper of Margaret had endeared her to him so much, that he lost no time in having the marriage ceremony reperformed between them with her real name; nor did he neglect to give directions for the monument he had inscribed to be taken down. It was not allowed to remain,

'To lift its head and lie'

any longer. The place it had occupied in the

thing that

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